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BENJAMIN GREGORY D.D. #

AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL RECOLLECTIONS
EDITED, WITH MEMORIALS
OF HIS LATER LIFE

BY

HIS ELDEST SON

WITH PORTRAIT

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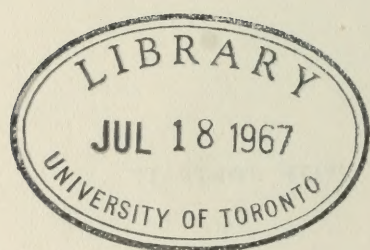
BENJAMIN GREGORY D.D.

AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL RECOLLECTIONS

EDITED WITH MEMOIRS

OF HIS LATER LIFE

BY HIS ELDEST SON



HENDERSON & STOUT

100 BATHURST ST.

TORONTO

To the
RIGHT HONOURABLE
SIR HENRY HARTLEY FOWLER, G.C.S.I., M.P.
THESE RECOLLECTIONS AND MEMORIALS
OF
HIS OLD TUTOR AND LIFE-LONG FRIEND
ARE INSCRIBED

PREFACE

THE greater part of this volume consists of an abridgement of my father's autobiography, which was published, under various titles, in the Magazine which he edited for a quarter of a century. These reminiscences aroused considerable interest, from their manner no less than their matter. Scores of letters from all parts of the United Kingdom, and from abroad, witnessed at once to the pleasure they had caused, and to their general—and often minute—accuracy. Occasionally correspondents supplemented the story, but corrections were few and unimportant. Often was my father urged to continue his "recollections," and to publish them in book form. His *Sidelights on the Conflicts of Methodism* is partially autobiographical, and he wrote a few similar sketches for the Magazine after his editorship had ceased, and for the *Methodist Recorder*. But this was all. I think that, at one time, he intended to complete his autobiography, but his energies became otherwise occupied. So far as the *Reminiscences* are concerned, I have confined myself almost entirely to abridging them. In order to interfere as little as possible with their author's style, I have omitted usually paragraphs and incidents rather than detached sentences.

No one can feel more acutely than myself the inadequacy of the *Later Life*. Abundant material exists for a more extended memoir, which, indeed, it was at first intended to issue. The design was abandoned, partly on account of delays which I could neither avoid nor lessen. Some of my father's friends will miss from this volume a feature for which they had looked. During his middle life he carried on, at irregular intervals, a voluminous correspondence with three special friends. A few of these letters I was permitted to see before they were despatched; two or three were shown to me by the recipients. To judge from these specimens, nothing could give a truer picture of my father's individuality—his genial wit, his faculty for literary criticism, his spiritual sympathies, his power of personal

religious teaching—than these letters. Unfortunately, at the decease of two of these correspondents, the letters were destroyed; the third writes to me that his invariable custom is to destroy all letters as soon as he has answered them. Letters relating to the private affairs of Methodism, of course, can not be printed.

It has been necessary to refer to controversies in which my father was engaged, and to indicate his views and motives in my own words. It may be well to state that I have reproduced my father's opinion without any intentional colouring of my own.

My thanks are due particularly to the widow of my father's brother, the Rev. Theophilus S. Gregory, for placing at my disposal a large number of letters to her husband, some of which are given in this volume; also to those who have contributed recollections, and my apologies to some of them for inevitable shortening of their communications. I must acknowledge grateful help of various kinds rendered by the Editor of the *Methodist Recorder*. It is with some reluctance that I send forth so defective a memorial volume—one falling so far short of the worth of its subject. Bulky biographies, however, are apt to defeat their own purpose.

J. ROBINSON GREGORY,

MANCHESTER,

1st November 1903.

* * * A memoir of Benjamin Gregory, Senior, written by his son, was published in *City Road Magazine*. This accounts for the paucity of reference to my grandfather in the *Autobiographical Recollections*.

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BOOK I

AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL RECOLLECTIONS

CHAPTER I

EARLIEST YEARS

I WAS born, on the 29th of November 1820, at the little town of Stokesley, in the extreme north of Yorkshire. Stokesley was, at that time, actually as well as relatively, a much more flourishing place than it now is ; an important industry having been removed to a more convenient site. The district (Cleveland), however, has become vastly enriched by the discovery of its immense mineral wealth ; which was first suspected, then detected, and at last begun to be exhumed by observant, enterprising Wesleyan-Methodists. But at the time of my birth, and for twenty years afterwards, the site now occupied by Middlesborough—was marked by a lone farmhouse, and nine labourers' cottages. No doubt the unprecedentedly rapid growth of its neighbour hamlet into a thriving port and borough, tended to deplete the little market town. In any case, seventy years ago Stokesley was, Methodistically speaking, a goodly pasture. Several of the principal townsfolk were Methodists ; for example, the family of the Meases, so well-known and so profoundly respected, especially in the north of England ; and the Mewburns, whose name has become a synonym for munificent liberality to the cause of God.

According to the testimony of my parents and my elder sisters, I was in infancy not a weakling only, but a wreakling. As I was my mother's first-born son, she naturally clung to my life. In after years, when I seemed inclined to be restive, she could always manage me by saying gravely : " Ah ! well, who knows but the old nurse told the truth ? When you were doomed by the doctor, and I broke out in uncontrollable grief,

she said : ' Ha-ah ! misthriss, what's the guid o' belderin' and rooarin' i' that uns ? I'd e'en let him gang ; ye'll ne'er hear no waur on 'im.' " However, my mother would not let me "gang." A kill or cure experiment was risked. A blister, the brand of which I bear upon my breast to this day, saved my life. My mother tried to turn this breast-mark, like every other peculiarity, to a good moral account. She often said : " Now if you ever get into a scrape, and run away from school or your apprenticeship, it will be impossible to conceal your identity ; that blister-mark will always tell of you."

At the next Conference after my birth, my father was reappointed to the neighbouring Circuit, Thirsk, which he had left nine years before. I must now record an extraordinary event, the frequent narration of which to me in my childhood had a very strong and salutary effect upon my mind.

At the Conference of 1820, my mother's father, a devoted Wesleyan-Methodist minister, worn down by his three years' superintendence of the then large and laborious Boston Circuit, had felt himself unequal, for the present, to the strain of the Itinerancy, and had obtained leave to seek, in partial retirement, the renewal of his strength. He settled at Spilsby, in the centre of a large circle of friends ; and, as he was but fifty-five years of age, was blessed with a robust constitution, and was withal comfortably circumstanced, no doubt was entertained of his speedy restoration. He had no definite ailment, his symptoms were wholly those of exhaustion through over-work. But that had befallen him which comes to many who suddenly exchange varied and engrossing preoccupation for a comparatively monotonous leisure. He had sunk into a state of morbid depression. This had happily passed away ; he had regained his habitual brightness ; and he was in an every way hopeful condition.

Such was his case, when, at daybreak, on January the 4th, 1822, my mother lay awake with me, her babe of thirteen months, by her side ; my father being away on one of his Circuit-rounds. She heard the sound of fire-irons and of crockery as my eldest sister was preparing the breakfast in the room below. She was just about to rise, when suddenly the bedroom-door opened, and in walked her father, dressed just as he used to be when leaving home for District-Meeting or for Conference. She started up, exclaiming : " O ! father, whoever

thought of seeing you?" He advanced to the bed and kissed her. She said: "I'll be down in a few minutes; you must want your breakfast." "No, child," he replied—his habitual mode of addressing his daughter—"I must not stay; I am going a long journey, but I wanted to see you first." He bade her "Good-bye," kissed her and her babe, and walked out of the room. His appearance was so life-like that until he turned to go, no thought of the supernatural ever crossed her mind. She immediately rose, threw on her dress, hurried downstairs, and eagerly asked her daughter what her father said. She had seen no one. On hearing this, my mother fell into a deadly fainting-fit, from which she was with difficulty brought back. On recovering, she was so alarmingly ill that it was necessary to fetch my father from the country-place at which he was planned. A letter was at once despatched to Spilsby, anxiously enquiring as to my grandfather's health; but before an answer could arrive, a letter was received announcing his death at the very hour at which my mother saw him.

The day of grandfather's death and last visit to his daughter, was a yearly solemnity in our house, sacred alike to earthly memory and to heavenly hope. But why do I record this incident? (1) Because it exerted, through my mother's occasional narration of its details, a very real and happy influence on my earliest religious life, to omit which would be an injustice to an important factor in that life. (2) Because the question of such instances of the interpenetration of the natural and the supernatural, the seen and the unseen worlds, is now once more before the public mind.¹

In my childhood I had all the impressibility which so frequently accompanies an extremely delicate physique. My mind was highly sensitized to outward nature. Every human being, every flower, everything that met my gaze was to me what the poet Gray calls "an ultimate object," awaking curiosity and interest for its own sake. It seems a singular fact that my earliest recollection of a human face is that of a person who was not a member of my own family. He afterwards rose to a too brief but brilliant distinction in the Methodist Ministry. I can only remember having seen him once, and that for a few moments. One day a young girl, whose features

¹ The reference is to *Phantoms of the Living* by Messrs Gurney, Myers & Podmore.

I cannot now recall, but who must have been my sister, was carrying me out, when a youth with a fair and florid complexion, and a gentle, beaming smile, and dressed in a blue coat and waistcoat, with a white apron, came up to me, and lifted up to my face a living owl. The solemn and mysterious stare of the bird's large and searching, yet fast-blinking eyes, each encircled by its feathery disc, photographed itself, along with its immediate surroundings, upon my receptive and retentive little brain. I can see it all now. The owl has always been to me one of the most interesting varieties of animated nature. In my school-days I could well understand the part it played in classical mythology as Minerva's bird. It still seems to me to be a striking symbol of preternatural and mystic insight, of significant silence, and of oracular prevision. Twenty-six years afterwards I had an unexpected testimony to the accuracy of my recollection. Conversing with friends as to the first object or incident we could, any of us, recall, I mentioned the youth and the owl. One of the company, the Rev. Philip Hardcastle, asked: "Have you any idea who that youth was?" I answered: "My sister tells me it was John Bumby, of Thirsk." "Well," he replied, "you have called up before me John Bumby just as he was at the time your father was at Thirsk. I was then an apprentice in that town, and in daily intercourse with Bumby. He dressed exactly as you have described. He wore a white apron, because he served in his father's shop, and he had a tame owl with which he liked to scare and to amuse the children." As my father's two year's term at Thirsk expired in August 1823, I must have been three months less than three years old when this little incident occurred.

I believe the first idea I ever developed with much strength, next to that of "the Ego"—"*Me*," as I should then have put it—was that of *Meum*. Whether it was innate or a quick infantile inference from my own short observation and experience, I cannot tell; but I had a conviction that to resume a gift, once given, was an act of robbery. One day my sister put upon my plate a piece of buttered toast, which she forthwith deemed too large, and took back and divided into two. This I hotly resented and stoutly resisted, as an invasion of the inborn rights of man. I vociferated with violent gesticulation and with tears: "That's *my* toast; you *gave* it me!" My protest

was respected. The abstracted half was restored. But that did not meet my views. I demanded the *status quo*. "Piece it; piece it!" I cried. I could not be persuaded that two halves, torn asunder, were equal to the whole.

Although so delicate, I can, at this time, have had no ailment, for my enjoyment of life was constant and intense. Our home was as peaceful, cheerful, and happy as can well be conceived. The Pickering Circuit, to which my father was removed in 1823, being very "wide," and some of the country places, such as Lastingham and Sinnington, being Methodistically as strong as was the Circuit town, my father was away from home at least two-thirds of the time. His startings and his returns, on the Circuit-horse, were stirring events in our little circle, especially the latter, as the saddle-bags, which went forth crammed with Wesleyan-Methodist literature, came back replete with farm-house luxuries, such as spare-rib, hams, cream-cheeses, and pork-pies. For the saddle-bags were a humanizing, light-diffusing institution: they were seed-baskets of truth; and the "riding preacher" thought it no scorn to discharge the duties of a Christian colporteur. And to the warm-hearted Yorkshire farmers it seemed no "great matter" to "minister carnal things," of a right savoury quality, to those who had ministered "spiritual things" to them.

Owing to my father's usual absence, the duty of conducting family worship devolved upon my mother, who always prayed *extempore* and with the deepest feeling, sometimes with a subdued and yet intense and tremulous emotion. I am conscious that nothing contributed so sweetly and so strongly to awake my spiritual sensibilities, or to foster and unfold what Fletcher calls "initial grace," or, as Quaker theologians state it, "to quicken the germ of life already in us"—and what both schools of theology truly trace to our individual connection with the Second Adam—as the daily gathering at the family altar, which was as regular as the morning family meal. The solemn, tender cadences of my father's or my mother's voice in reading the Scriptures and in prayer were music to my ears. The reality of our home religion made the unseen and eternal world as real to me as home itself; not often *realized* so closely and so clearly, but yet sometimes with a vividness with which the world around me could not compete. Our Father in heaven was to me as real a Personality as

either of my earthly parents. I was made to feel my near relatedness to Him, and responsibility to Him: that He it is "with Whom we have to do":

"From Whom we all proceed, to Whom we tend:
Path, Motive, Guide, Original, and End."

Religion was presented to me in the most attractive aspect, as "charming" as Divine Philosophy:

"Not harsh and crabbed, as dull fools suppose,
But musical as is Apollo's lute."

How much more easy it is to "receive the truth in the love of it," when it addresses us with a mother's gentleness and a sister's smile! I was brought up in the firmest faith that if I died trusting in Christ, and striving to love and serve Him, I should most surely go to heaven. This faith was much confirmed by the account often given me of the last hours of my little sister Rachel, who died before I was born. When told that she was dying, she betrayed no tremor, but looking up to heaven, she said, in her own infant-speech:

"O that I at last may stand
With the sheep at Thy right hand;
Take the crown *so freely given*,
Enter in by Thee to heaven!"

The reality of my faith was tested by an incident which occurred when I was four years and a half old, and which I was not at all likely to forget. At the bottom of *Hungate*—pronounced Hung-gat—the main street of the town, ran a stream called *Hungate Beck*; it was not deep just there, as horses and vehicles could cross it with ease. But a very little way up stream was a mill, and when the flood-gates of the dam were raised, the water became deep and swift enough to drown a very little child. One summer afternoon my sister, seven years old, and myself were amusing ourselves by catching leaves as they floated past us. In my eagerness I overbalanced myself and fell into the brook. I had been warned that if I fell in I should be drowned; and, finding myself in, I had no doubt whatever that I should be drowned accordingly; and *as little doubt that I should go to heaven: I had not the slightest dread of death.* I was in the water long enough to experience the delightfulness of drowning. As I made no struggle, the sensation was so restful that the gurgling of the water in my

ears disturbed it. My experience was the direct opposite to that of Clarence in his dream : " O God, methought, what pain it is to drown ! " *Methought*, how nice it is to drown ! However, the miller came to the rescue. I was *drawn out of the water*. This scene also stamped itself upon my memory by the contrast between two figures which greeted me on the bank : that of the stalwart miller, covered with flour, and that of a grinning, white-toothed, bright-eyed little sweep, whose gibes cut me to the quick. But I was far more aggrieved by my reception at home. Sewing-meetings were in vogue at least sixty-four years ago ; and such a gathering took place at our house that very day. I was expecting to be lionized, having been taught a pretty little poem from the *Youth's Instructor*, to recite for the entertainment of the ladies. Instead of this, I was hurried off to bed ! This seemed to me to be punishing misfortune—a hard-hearted and unjust proceeding.

The creed of my childhood was very simple, and, on the whole, most cheerful. Its foundation-fact was the loving, holy Fatherhood of " God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth ; " and the second was *like unto it* : " Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord. " What in modern divinity is called *Soteriology* and *Eschatology* held a proper and therefore a prominent place. Our absolute and urgent need of an Almighty and Allworthy Saviour, by reason of our inborn tendencies to evil and inability to subdue those tendencies without the help of God, was powerfully set forth. " The sinfulness of sin " was in no wise cloaked ; but its " exceeding sinfulness " was shown to lie in disobedience to our loving Father—God. Christ was " set forth " as " a propitiation through faith in His blood, " and the all-sufficiency and all-availableness of His atonement were constantly insisted on, as making us sure of " grace through all the way, and glory at the end. " It is because they have fast hold of these truths that " our people die well ; " and, for the same reason, our little children die well too. The Gospel doctrines of *Sin* and *Atonement* are in exact accordance with the moral *consciousness* of childhood. It was my firm hold of Christ, or rather my feeling of His firm hold of me, which made *Hungate Beck* to me a parted Jordan, a " silver streak " between " the Preacher's " little one and the Promised Land.

Yet of direct, formal, stated religious instruction I had, at this early age, next to nothing ; and the little I had was purely

tentative. I do not remember the time when I could not read with comfort. When four years of age I was encouraged to read a book which deals with the first principles of the Christian faith. I cannot recall its title, though it must have been a work of some *prestige*, as the first paragraph had a comic and yet gruesome association, having been recited, or rather *mouthed out* in the dolefullest monotone, by one of the biggest scholars at the Sunday-school anniversary. But the only section in it suitable for children was one which tried to make natural history subservient to natural theology. Its motto should have been: "Ask now of the beasts, and they will tell thee." It distributed amongst the brute creation the virtues and vices of mankind; electing some animal as the representative and type of each. Had this chapter been illustrated by woodcuts, it would have been interesting and impressive. But the rest of the book was a succession of flat homilies about truths with which I had already been made acquainted in a much more attractive and influential way. It was mere doctrine desiccated; deprived of all its succulence and sweetness. Wisely and happily, my repugnance to this dry diet was respected. Isaiah painting the pastoral landscape of the Gospel times, says: "Then shall the lambs feed after their manner"—on the tenderest and most nutritive herbage—"pleased, to the last, to crop the flowery food." Assuredly my mind was fed on *flowery* food.

But what I read, at this age, was of little consequence as compared with what I heard read. We had always some fresh and interesting book *in cut*, which on winter evenings was read aloud by my mother or my eldest sister, whilst the others worked. The first book that powerfully affected me was Mrs Sherwood's *Little Emma and her Nurse*. This was a sort of feminine counterpart to an earlier tale of hers: *Little Henry and his Bearer*, which had won very great popularity; being a pleasing and pathetic account of a little English boy, born in India, who had been the means of converting his Hindoo man nurse. This I read afterwards, but was not nearly so tenderly touched by it as by the later story. It is impossible to estimate the service rendered by Mrs Sherwood to the children of her own generation and the next, through her alluring, healthy tales. Several of her books my own children found as charming and as useful as had both their parents before them.

A still smaller book by the same author, *The Little Woodman*

and his *Dog Cæsar*, exerted at this time a salutary influence upon my mind. It is a thoroughly healthy story, which Mrs Sewell found it worth her while to versify under the title: *The Little Forester and his Friend*. In later childhood, I read two other little works by Mrs Sherwood: *The Infant Pilgrim*, and *The Fairchild Family*. The former is a sagacious adaptation of *The Pilgrim's Progress* to the experiences of Christian childhood. The value of *The Fairchild Family* consists in its deep acquaintance and its hearty sympathy with child-nature and child-life; in its unforced humour, and its wholesome tenderness. Everything is looked at from a child's point of view. It must be confessed, however, that the religious element is injudiciously obtruded, even to the extent of frequent forms of prayer. This, I remember, repelled me. Another book, by the same writer, *The Two Knights*, is well-calculated to stimulate, refine and elevate the imagination and the moral sense; but its effect is marred by an exaggerated royalism. Mrs Sherwood's stories have considerable artistic merit; they possess no small descriptive charm, and power of character-drawing and character-grouping, and have a well-defined and well-developed plot.

Another piece of Liliputian literature, which lingers in my memory is Miss Edgworth's *Simple Susan*, the tale which so powerfully affected Walter Scott in his earliest boyhood.

A third female writer who had a large share in moulding my mind during this plastic period was Hannah More, through her *Sacred Dramas*, and her *Shepherd of Salisbury Plain*, both of which were read to me by my mother and my sister. The play, *Moses in the Bulrushes*, made all the deeper impression on my imagination and my memory because it was performed by a select *troupe* of the elder Sunday-scholars. I remember well some brisk discussions in our little sitting-room as to the propriety or the expedience of such a mode of teaching Scripture history.

Such was the hold which the Wiltshire shepherd took on my infantile imagination, as my first type of the cheerful and elevated piety of the poor, that, on my visits to Salisbury Plain, not even the impressive mystery of Stonehenge could obscure the figure of the happy Methodist (for a Methodist he was), as represented by the rude wood-cut on the title-page of the literary Churchwoman's edifying tract.

My first *Sunday* book was old Samuel Wesley's *History of the Old and New Testament*, in verse, with store of quaint, antique "cuts." This was partly read and partly heard; the illustrations being themselves illustrated by copious explanation and expatiation.

No moral lesson was more deeply impressed upon my conscience than the heinousness and the certain punishment of disobedience to parents. One of my very earliest books was a *Hieroglyphic Bible*, consisting of texts in which the substantives were pictured. Some of them were evidently chosen solely on account of the readiness with which they lent themselves to this process. My embryo-exegesis was sadly at fault in its struggles to extract the moral meaning of Amos iii. 12: "As the shepherd taketh out of the mouth of the lion two legs, or a piece of an ear; so shall the children of Israel be taken out that dwell in Samaria in the corner of a bed, and in Damascus in a couch." But another of these picture-passages found its way straight to my heart: "The eye that mocketh at his father, and despiseth to obey his mother, the ravens of the valley shall pick it out, and the young eagles shall eat it" (Proverbs xxx. 17). Whenever I felt tempted to unduteousness that hieroglyphic eye would fix upon me a monitory and minatory stare. I cannot but agree with the eminent ministers of different denominations who regard as one of the (thank God! very few) inauspicious changes during the last half-century, the decreased deference paid by young people to their parents. Now that I have long since grown into the dignity of Grandfather Gregory, I find strong comfort in the fact that, among so many causes of regret and even of remorse, I cannot reproach myself with one disrespectful word, look, or tone towards either of my parents, from the time when I knew "to refuse the evil, and choose the good," or "to cry, My father, and My mother."

Through dwelling in the precincts of the sanctuary, I got an early glimpse of another aspect of religious life. The door of the large vestry being but a few paces from our own back door, we children were allowed, on summer evenings, to attend the Prayer-meeting. This was a great treat, as both prayers and singing were of the liveliest kind; and the mode of conducting the service was utterly unconventional; and the people always made much of us for our father's sake. As the

ministers preached, as a rule, six nights out of the seven, of course, they could not attend the Prayer-meeting. The leadership was arranged impromptu, by some one asking some one else to take it. The leader "gave out" the first hymn, and led the first prayer, and then "threw the meeting open." The free and easy, and yet patriarchal way, in which things were managed may be illustrated by the first Prayer-meeting incident I can recall. It was the custom for every one, before lifting up his voice in prayer, to give out the verse or two which he wished to be sung. It so happened that a young man who had been up to London to learn a trade, having "served his time" and returned home, made his way to the old familiar Prayer-meeting. Amongst other accomplishments, he had acquired the Cockney dialect, perhaps with some exaggeration. He rose and gave out, with an air of "consequence:" "A *chawge* to keep I *her*!" Whereupon the patriarchal leader cut short his ministration, with the gruff order: "Then sit thee doon, an' keep it." The time it took his Cockneyship to collapse is not worth mentioning.

Another of my earliest Prayer-meeting reminiscences is the petition of an earnest brother, who seemed to hold, in some form, the doctrine of irresistible grace. He prayed: "O Lord, bring sinners to Thy house. An' if they *we-ant* cum, tak' 'em by t' scuff o' t' neck, an' mak' 'em cum!" This was the popular mode of showing disobedient children, and servant-lads or girls, the way to the "way of safety" and the post of duty, to which they could not be induced to go of their "own sweet will."

Yet with all the freedom and the informality of the North-Riding Prayer-meeting, there was, in both prayer and singing, a deep undertone of plaintiveness and pathos. One petition, common to almost all the prayers, excited my curiosity so much that I was fain to ask my mother for an explanation: "Mother, whereabouts is the *way-stowling wilderness*?" "I don't know, my dear; I never heard of it. Who's been putting that into your head?" "O! but it must be somewhere close by; for all the people that come to the Prayer-meeting have to go through it; and it must be a very dangerous place, for every one prays: 'Lord, keep us as we pass through this *way-stowling wilderness*.'" "O, I see now!" she said. "What they say is: 'This waste howling wilderness.' They think

that a good man's journey through this life is like the journey of the children of Israel through the wilderness. It was mostly sand and rock, you know; and the winds as they swept over it, and the wild beasts as they prowled about it, used to howl in the night terribly; so Moses called it: 'The waste *howling* wilderness.'

The mystery was further explained to me by a hymn which was one of the great favourites in the Prayer-meeting. It was sung to a wild, weird tune, so far as I know, peculiar to the North Riding. There is a striking passage in Sir Walter Besant's powerful book, *The Children of Gibeon*, in which he describes a young lady as singing, for the comfort of a blind woman, a "hymn which has now dropped out of use and been forgotten, since the Churches resolved to stifle the sadness of life. . . . This hymn begins with the words: 'We've no abiding city here;' and, as Valentine sang, the blind old woman joined her hands as one who prays, and the tears gathered in her eyes." The hymn in which that verse occurs has not yet "dropped out of use."

At this early period another powerful factor in the religious life—REVIVALISM—was brought close home to me. A *Revival*, as I then understood the word, I should now describe as—a *popular rush into the kingdom of God*, such as our Lord Himself describes as the result of the Baptist's ministrations and His own: "The kingdom of God is preached, *and every man presseth into it*" (Luke xvi. 16).

In 1825, two Revivalist local-preachers, Messrs Barker and Skelton, held a series of special services in Pickering chapel. These kept up "the bright succession" between John Nelson, Richard Burdsall and Sammy Hick, Squire Brooke and Isaac Marsden, in Yorkshire; and Charles Richardson and George Nicholson, in Lincolnshire. I was judiciously restrained from attending services too late and too exciting for a little child; but the two Revivalists called for a few minutes at our house, to bid us Good-bye, and to drop a word of gentle exhortation to the children. They did not even sit down; but their look and tone produced an impression on me which has never been effaced. Meeting one of them incidentally in Scarborough, twenty-four years afterwards, I recognised him immediately.

At that time, we were incessantly hearing of the effects of David Stoner's mighty ministry in York; and Zechariah Taft

was then stationed at Malton, the intervening Circuit between York and Pickering. His wife (late the famous Mary Barrett, the means of the conversion of Thomas Jackson and of hundreds more) was still in full career as the great female Revivalist of the age; and the wondrous story of her toils, travels and successes, which had just been published, was read by us at home with intensest interest. From that day to this I have regarded with reverence all genuine Revivalists, as an order raised up by God according to the needs of His Church and Divinely designated to their special work, by being Divinely endowed for it. True, every Methodist preacher ought to be in heart a Revivalist, as every Methodist preacher should be in spirit "a Home-missionary." But as there are men specially qualified and specially utilized for Home-missionary work, so there are men (and there were women, *e.g.* the four ministers' wives: Mrs Taft, Mrs Pattison, Mrs Key, and Mrs Holgate) specially qualified, that they may be specially devoted, to do the work of a Revivalist.

There was another very animated and effective way in which I learnt lessons on the Christian life. The hill on which stood the imposing and impressive ruins of the grand old Pickering Castle was within a short walk of our house; and my sisters and a young friend of theirs used to take me with them, to act there, as far as possible, some scenes in the *Pilgrim's Progress*. The remains of the moat did duty for the *Slough of Despond*; the steep ascent beyond made a very good *Hill Difficulty*; the frowning Keep served admirably for *Doubting Castle*; a field close by, glowing with buttercups and marigolds, was a veritable *By-path Meadow*; the far-famed Vale of Pickering made a most attractive *Valley of Humility*; and the bounding hills were easily transfigured into the *Delectable Mountains*.

An event looked forward to with delight was the arrival of the monthly book-parcel from City-road, bringing the *Youth's Instructor*, and the Magazine, with a portrait of a minister: Adam Clarke, or Henry Moore, the President, or Richard Waddy, with a background of landscape, or Richard Watson, or Thomas Jackson, the Editor, or some other worthy of whom father or mother, or both, would be sure to have much to tell. These portraits were all the more interesting as the best of them were painted by a Methodist genius from a village in the

Pickering Circuit, John Jackson, R.A., then in the height of his fame. Then there was a store of anecdotes and "Accounts of Physical Phenomena," travellers' wonders, and scientific experiments, thrilling Missionary intelligence, "Facts of Natural History," and "Progress of Mechanical Invention." It was in the Magazine, March 1824, that I heard the first puff of "the steam-engine."

But to me by far the most attractive and the most effective portion of the Magazine was the poetry, which my mother and sister used to fasten on at once; the former reading it aloud, and the latter committing to memory all the most striking pieces, and then rehearsing them to me as we walked in the leafy lanes, or soothing me to sleep at night by *crooning* them to me with an intonation that acted like a spell. Two of these pieces especially had a traceable influence upon me then and afterwards. The one was Joshua Marsden's *What is Time?* which came out in January 1824. It began:—

"I asked an aged man, a man of cares,
Wrinkled and curved, and white with hoary hairs :
'Time is the *warp* of life,' he said, 'O tell
The young, the fair, the gay, to *weave it well*.'"

The other was Montgomery's *Climbing Boy*.

"Mr Montgomery of Sheffield" was then a frequent contributor to the Magazine, some of his happiest efforts being put forth expressly for this periodical; notably his noble threnody: *The Missionary's Burial* (September 1824). It was thus headed: "John Smith, who died in prison, February 6th, 1824, under sentence of death by a court-martial, in Demerara, was ordered to be secretly buried in the night; and no person, *not even his widow*, was allowed to follow the corpse."

William M. Bunting, too, then began his contributions to the Magazine. Just below Agnes Bulmer's lofty Pindaric *Ode for the New Year*, and Joshua Marsden's lyric *What is Time?* came a little *Hymn for the New Year* and the Covenant Service, signed *Juvenis*, which has since been sung by millions of Methodists, and will doubtless be sung by millions more, so long as our most impressive annual service shall be solemnized;

"O God! how often hath Thine ear
To me in willing mercy bowed."

It was through the *Methodist Magazine* that I first, and so

early, became acquainted with not Montgomery only, but also Wordsworth, Scott, and Byron. In February 1824, between Mrs Bulmer's *Lines for the Album of a Persian Gentleman*, and one of "Mr Bowring's" *Translations from the Russian*, gleamed out "Mr Wordsworth's" gem :—

"Not seldom, clad in radiant vest,
Deceitfully goes forth the morn," etc.

A little earlier came Sir Walter Scott's *Song of the Jewish Maiden*, followed by Sterne's *Cuckoo, Lark, and Donkey* ; and a little later came Byron's "The Assyrian came down, like a wolf on the fold."

Every third book-parcel brought to my mother and sister a little piece of Church-work which they executed *con amore*, with the nicest precision and the most scrupulous neatness. In those days the Quarterly Tickets did not reach the Superintendent's house in packages, but in sheets. So it fell to the Superintendent or his wife, or his daughter, or both, to individualize each ticket ; and so once a quarter the scissors of the sanctuary were called into requisition. This occupation naturally induced spontaneous, easy talk about the great privilege of Church-membership, the charm of the Class-meeting, and the wonderful development of the Society-Ticket, along with the development of Methodism itself ; and mother would steal up stairs, and bring down from some secret drawer her tenderly treasured store of Tickets : the early ones thin and tiny, rough in paper, and rude in bordering. And then would come the tale of her conversion and the deliberate committal of herself to Christ and to His Church, and her admission to the helpful fellowship of the people of God. Whereat we children looked with reverence upon the Ticket ; and I discharged my diminutive diaconate of picking up the "snips" not without a feeling of importance. What if I had then foreseen the close connection I should have one day, and for many days, with Quarterly Tickets, the Magazine, book - parcel, and all !

An incidental advantage was our spontaneously learning the ticket-text, quarter after quarter.

Another quarterly event of great interest to me was the Lovefeast. Not that I was admitted to that privileged religious festivity ; but the remainder of the Lovefeast cake was looked

upon as a kind of *shewbread*, "which was not lawful for" any one "to eat, but only for the" preacher's family. Hence, as the provision was always made upon a Yorkshire scale, one of the stewards would bring in, with smiling face, several basketsful of dainty "seed-bread."

Nor was my mental training domestic and informal only. At four years of age I was allowed to go to a dame-school, along with my younger sister, aged seven. I say *allowed*, because the arrangement was most agreeable to me, as was every other which enlarged my area of observation and experience. As we kept no servant, it was, doubtless, a convenience to have two mercurial, inquisitive, experimenting and exploiting children out of the way a few hours daily. The schooling was rudimentary in the extreme. Of course, we were well-grounded in the alphabet. And following close upon the heels of Z was a supplementary character: &—bearing a feminine name, the meaning of which I never could conjecture till five-and-twenty years afterwards. It was called *Ann Parsy*, corrupted in the Midlands into *Ann Pussy*. As my solution is not much better than some precarious "result" of "Higher Criticism," I am bound to insist, with domineering dogmatism, that *Ann Parsy* was originally: *And per se—and, by itself*.

At this seminary I learnt wondrous little, except the North Yorkshire dialect, and the North Yorkshire mode of spelling Scripture proper names. This was very odd. The first name on the list had to be rendered thus: "Great A, little a, r-o-n: *Aaron*;" the next: "A, by self, A, b-e-l: *Abel*. Isaac's initial thus became the symbol of the very opposite character to his own—that of egotistic isolation and emphatic individualism: "*I, by self, I—s-a-a-c, sack, Isaac*." Our one Lesson-book was called, even by the schoolmistress, the *Reedymadeesy*, transformed on the title-page into *Reading Made Easy*.

The discipline was sufficiently Matriarchal. True, the Pickering School-dame, with her huge high widow's cap, cut a formidable figure, and her threats were terrible. Her panacea for school-child dulness seemed to me, *at the time*, very mysterious; and as I never either experienced or witnessed its application, I could not observe its working. But her standing menace was: "I'll *ding* thy *ye-ad agean t' wall*." Afterwards, when phrenology was in fashion; and capacity, character and destiny were all declared to be determined

by one's craniological "bumps," I recognised in the idea an advanced expedient for promoting early intellectual development.

As the little preachers'-houses stood one on either side of the entrance to the chapel-yard, we saw a good deal of my father's colleagues and their families. During the first year, the Superintendent was a fatherly, pleasant-mannered Scotchman, bearing the historic name of George Douglas. His face was not the index of his heart, for he had the most corrugated countenance I ever saw. It seemed one wilderness of wrinkles. To me his memory is indissolubly associated with his favourite hymn: "O God! our Help in ages past," which he gave out with the most plaintive, tremulous Scottish intonation, lingering on the last word of every verse as with a mournful reluctance to let it go.

Mrs Douglas was reputed to be wealthy, and the shy little children had about them an air of quiet gentility. It was with little Mellis Douglas that I formed my first friendship, which was happily renewed and strengthened at Woodhouse-Grove, we being of the same age.

At the opening of our second year at Pickering, the superintendency crossed the chapel-yard and rested on my father; the second preacher bearing the historic, aristocratic English name of Hyde. Having no children of his own, he was wont to romp with us in the chapel-yard with an *abandon* which my sisters thought hardly worthy of the Christian minister.

My recollections of the Pickering Methodists are most delightful. There was nothing sombre, stiff, sober-suited or drab-coloured about any of the Methodist ladies. Mary Howitt complains of the depressing, chilling effect which the exclusion of bright colours and of graceful outline from Quaker costume had upon her childhood. It was otherwise with the Methodists of my early life. My mother and sisters were, indeed, patterns of plainness. But the Methodist ladies of Pickering, and those who called to see us from the country-places, were all, both young and old, clad in the most tasteful and befitting style. Their native comeliness was not disguised either by affected quaintnesses or outlandish fashions. Gracefulness of female attire is not one of the many points of improvements in the Victorian era. The generosity and hospitality of the people were unbounded. At whatever house

we called, even a labourer's cottage, we were constrained to eat, or to drink milk or butter-milk, whey or wort, or sent home laden with fruit. I could not go with my sister on an errand to a shop and return empty. I was thus kept in affluent supply of what were to me—as everybody called them—*marvels* (marbles), real “stoneys,” or great round “alleys.” I may here be allowed to quote from my Presidential Pastoral to the Convention preparatory to the General Meeting in behalf of the Thanksgiving Fund for the Sheffield District, held in Sheffield, October 1879:—

One of my earliest and most pleasant reminiscences is of a worthy Methodist, in comparatively humble circumstances, in a little town in the North of Yorkshire. The vividness of my recollection of him through the fifty-four years which have passed away since last I saw him, is doubtless to some extent attributable to the playful generosity with which, as he came to chapel, he slipped money into the pocket of the preacher's little son, as if it had been as legitimate a receptacle for freewill offerings as the poor-box or the collecting-plate. . . . I can see his rather spare, erect figure, and his brisk, elastic gait, his keen, bright countenance beaming with benevolence and cheerfulness, as duly, five minutes before service-time—preaching, early Sunday-morning or week-evening prayer-meeting—he stepped along the pavement between the preacher's house and the vestry door, thus serving to the preacher's household the purpose of a sermon-bell. I instinctively think of him and his buoyant step whenever I read Keble's lines:

Who carry music in their heart
Through dusky lane and wrangling mart,
Plying their daily task with busier feet
Because their secret souls a holy strain repeat.

I can see him at the prayer-meeting as his whole form swayed to and fro, in rapt unison with the hymn. God blessed him with three sons, who were trained in their parents' principles. It is said that when His Royal Highness, the Prince of Wales, visited Sheffield, few objects in the town arrested his attention so strongly as the almost palatial establishment of these three Methodist brothers. All honour to the memory of the good, generous, joyous, punctual, chapel-going, Class-going Thomas Cole, of Pickering!

The pocket-money incident marks a veritable epoch in my life. Whilst my chum and coeval, little Mellis Douglas, was left in petticoats, what must my mother do but promote her only son to the dignity of “buttoned clothes!” Every pedlar, in those days, knew well the inferiority of tape to buttons. “Buttoned clothes” were to a Yorkshire lad a sort of *toga*

prætexta. Judging from conventional speech, it was almost like the putting on of personality. Before that investiture I had simply been "a noticin' little *thing*;" now I was "*Master Gregory*." In those days we were very "early birds." So, on that memorable Sunday morning, I turned out betimes on the flags of the chapel-yard, and, like young David in Saul's armour, " essayed to go," for I "had not proved" my fresh enduement. I was strutting, I fear Bunyan would have said "swaggering," up and down, when Mr Cole strode in to the early Sunday morning prayer-meeting. He came up to me with beaming face, and said: "Ha! you must let me *handsel*¹ that pocket." He then slipped in my pocket the first coin I ever had which was "mine to keep;" "mine to do what I liked with."

I was tricked out like a little lord; with a large rich frill over my jacket, like that one sees in pictures of the juvenile nobility. I was measured for a new style of shoes, for which a higher price was paid, that they might be *rights* and *lefts*; no distinction being then made between the two feet, except on express order, and for extra payment.

Another memorable event of my Pickering life was my earliest acquaintance with the farmstead of a first-class English yeoman, Mr Stables of Sinnington, a near relation of the famous York Methodists, the Burdsalls and the Lyths, who would have the whole family spend a week at his house, when it was my father's turn on that side of the Circuit. So, one market-day, he took us all back with him in his comfortable, roomy vehicle. What times we had! racing on the velvet lawn or paddock, paddling in the spacious fish-pond; and in wondering inspection of its well-guarded dairy, with its delicious coolness and its conscientious cleanliness, its broad vats filled with richly creaming milk; and its slippery, polished flooring, as of some stately entrance-hall.

An old man with a young heart may be indulged in recollections of his first-remembered Christmas, that of 1824. Never can I forget the awe (not dread) with which I awoke at the sound of the sweetly solemn "*waits*." I thought the judgment-day had come, and looked out for the angel forms whose songs I seemed to hear. At Christmas-tide the perennial

¹ "Handsel," a useful old word, meaning *to be the first to make use of* anything. Thus an old Puritan writer says: "Christ *handseled* the grave for all His people."

Yorkshire hospitality reached its height. We received, and were expected to return, the congratulatory call of all the principal Methodist families in the place. The latter duty had to be judiciously spread over the twelve days which intervened between the twenty-fifth of December and old Christmas Day, or *Twelfth night*, to which most people clung. Whenever one might call, out came the "pepper-cake and cheese," an institution I have met with in no other part of merry England. I suppose the staple dainty must have owed its name to its most intense ingredient, cayenne pepper. All festive cake, in the Yorkshire of that day, was called *spice-cake*, and the itinerant confectioner was the *spice-man*. *Pepper-cake* held in the North-Riding the rank assigned to *parkin* in the West-Riding. To partake sparingly of this sumptuous fare was taken as a reflection on its merits.

Of course the streets rang with the well-worn carols of the season, the most popular of which may well be taken as the *Te Deum* of the *happy-go-lucky* school of theology, seeing that it eliminates from Christianity the justice and holiness of God, and our need of expiation. It was supplied with a significant refrain, admonitory of the tendency of all such lopsided divinity:

"God rest you, merry gentlemen,	With a pocket full o' money,
Let nothing you dismay!	An' a cellar full o' beer,
For Jesus Christ, our Saviour,	I wish you a merry Christmas,
Was born on Christmas Day.	And a happy New Year."

But there was a strange ditty, taught no doubt by the Begging Friars many centuries ago, which, so far as I know, was, within the memory of man, sung only in the Yorkshire Dales. It was a rhymed version of the Popish legend about the child-Christ cursing the companion who cheated Him at play. It began:—

"O! all by the streams and the green leaves of life,
And upon a Summer's day,
Sweet Jesus asked His mother's leave
Whether He might go to play.

"'O! to play and to play,' said the Virgin Marie
'O! to play and to play get You gone;
*And let me hear no complaints of You
At night when You come home.'*"

The predictions of local soothsayers formed a considerable

proportion of the popular literature of the place and period. Of these the two principal were: *Mother Shipton's Prophecies* and *Nixon's Prophecies*. Many of them were affirmed to have been signally fulfilled already, and the rest were confidently expected to come true. The most frequently repeated, however, yet awaits fulfilment: "A man with three thumbs will hold three kings' horses, while England is won and lost three times in one day."

In respect to reading, the North Riding compared unfavourably with the East Riding. In the former, the love-tale seemed to predominate; in the latter, the book of devotion. To my sister's question: "Have you plenty of nice books to read?" the common Pickering answer was: "Hoh! yis; we've a good few books about luv and syke like. Mebbe ye'd like to see 'em." At Patrington it was: "Hoh! yis; we've a seet (sight, spectacle) o' books about the Looard and things."

CHAPTER II

"A HAPPY ENGLISH CHILD"—SOJOURN IN NORFOLK

IN 1825, my father's term at Pickering closed. Hitherto few itinerants had been favoured with such a contiguity of Circuits, or had been reinvited and reappointed to the same Circuit after the prescribed interval of years, or had cost Methodism less for removal expenses. Excepting Bedford and Whitehaven, all his Circuits had been wholly, or in part, in Lincolnshire or the North Riding. But now he had a long remove, to New Buckenham, in Norfolk. I should think he went by invitation, as the leading Methodist families in the two principal towns of the Circuit, the Littleprouds, of Attleborough, and the Darknights, of Pulham, were my mother's near relations. But how to get from the romantic valley in North Yorkshire to the flat-ironed pastures of Norfolk! Both the *terminus a quo* and the *terminus ad quem* lay far away from any great trunk-road. And "Terminus," in the modern meaning of the term—there was no such thing, from one end of England to the other. The iron-road and the iron-horse were not yet born out of the big-brained North. Such were the difficulties of locomotion sixty-four years ago that the migration of a household from the North of Yorkshire to the centre of Norfolk was an arduous expedition. Travelling by a succession of mail coaches for at least two hundred and fifty miles, with four children, one of them an infant of days, was a slow and expensive process fraught with manifold discomfort, and exposing to all sorts of vexatious exactions and perplexing uncertainties. The supply was so closely adjusted to the probable demand, that in order to secure even a single place, it was necessary to "book" at least a day beforehand. Therefore, on taking "council at Abel," and casting up the probable expenses of the journey, it was deemed the wisest plan to charter a waggon to convey the "stuff" and "the souls" the entire distance. One advantage of this arrangement was that a

great part of the route lay amongst the hospitable farmsteads of my father's former Circuits. The journey was to be accomplished in six days, between the two Sundays ; for, at that time, an inter-Circuit excursion, including a fêst Sunday, was to most Methodist preachers a thought unthinkable. Four days would have been required to cover the distance by the combined service of coach, chaise and carrier's cart.

To my boyish spirits, the itinerancy seemed "a great invention." What a glorious upset and kicking up of dust, to begin with ! True, our *impedimenta* were not so massive as to seriously impede. My father's library and bookshelves formed the only considerable item. The former was so much in excess of the normal itinerant's library, and consequently of the shelving provided by "the Quarter Board," as the Quarterly Meeting was popularly called, that my father was obliged, at his own proper (? improper) cost to provide himself with portable and transportable bookshelves. These, with their precious burden, took the place of pictures in our tiny rooms ; and with their coloured cord (for, of course, they could not be nailed to the wall as fixtures), and their envelope of coloured paper, fulfilled the ornamental function, not contemptibly. And the most exciting part of the packing was the Battle of the Books. I made a grand discovery, which might, in after years, have saved me no small trouble, as critic and reviewer—that volumes of the same "mo," if placed in single file with due distance one from the other, may all be floored with one touch of the little finger ! For the slightest touch, at either end of the series, brings them all down as flat as a wheat-row before the sickle ! Now these packing-cases, book-crammed as a youth going up to his B.A. exam., served well, when skilfully cushioned with supernumerary wearing apparel, both for chair and couch.

Our first baiting-place for the horses was what seemed to me then (I have never seen it since) the clean, bright town of Malton. But till the fourth night we were almost independent of inns, as the generous Methodists at Pickering, and at our subsequent successive stages, had, like true Primitive Christians, "laden us with such things as were necessary," and many a substantial luxury besides. On the first night we were distributed amongst the hearty Burdsalls and Lyths of York, my father's years' long friends ; having covered thirty

miles. On Tuesday we moved on by Doncaster to Bawtry (forty-seven miles), where we were entertained by the Gaius of the Church in those parts, Mr Nettleship, whose happy guest I found myself again thirty years afterwards. He had become my father's fast friend when stationed in the Retford and Epworth Circuits. Wednesday night was passed at a familiar farmstead in one of my father's Lincolnshire Circuits. Thursday night was the first on which we had to "put up at" an inn. Thus far "all went merry as a marriage bell." But here my father's topographical experience came to an end, and our driver knew just as much about the "lay" of the country as did the astral waggoner of Charles's Wain. On the Friday our charioteer, acting on ill-stated and worse understood directions from mine host, and injudiciously attempting to save distance and to escape toll-bars in an unknown country by a series of short cuts, got involved in a labyrinth of Cambridge-shire lanes; and in the evening we found ourselves at the very place from which we had started in the morning. I have been told by a worthy Methodist farmer residing in that neighbourhood, that this feat might be easily accomplished even now by any one unfamiliar with the neighbourhood who should leave the main turnpike road from one market town to another, and strike across country by roads connecting farm with farm.

This mistake resulted in the loss of two days, inasmuch as instead of reaching our destination by Saturday evening, we only got as far as Downham, where we were obliged to spend the Sunday. On the eighth night we found ourselves at Attleborough, where we were entertained by my mother's relatives, and on the ninth morning, having discharged the misguided waggoner, we walked the intervening five miles to New Buckenham; pausing with intense interest and with some emotion to gaze upon my mother's birthplace, a farmhouse overlooking Old Buckenham Green and fronting the parish church.

To me how delightful were those eight days and a half of nomad life in the golden harvest weather! Nor was it without an enduring educational effect. It stretched and stored my little carpet-bag of mind with new ideas and happy, healthy images. The awe-inspiring majesty of York Minster, the grand old churches of Selby and Doncaster, the sight of Lincoln Cathedral at a few miles' distance, the towering

steeples of the fen-country, landmarks to wayfarer and voyager alike—all these left vivid pictures on my fancy, and awoke a passion for Gothic architecture which has been strengthened by visits to every cathedral and almost every famous church on the island, and to many of the noblest piles in Ireland and on the Continent of Europe. I also acquired a healthy taste for simple lowland scenery, which has always had for me a restful charm. To this was owing, doubtless, much of the fascination of Tennyson's first lyrics; for he was, first of all, the Laureate of the Lowlands. Hence I could appreciate his idyllic vignettes, such as:—

"On either side the river lie
 Long fields of barley and of rye,
 That clothe the wold and meet the sky;
 And through the fields the road runs by."

"And there the surly village-churls,
 And the red cloaks of market-girls."

And I could almost say: "A willowed swamp rivals the beauty of Italian skies." As we always took "the top of the morning," and when the horses had enjoyed their afternoon rest, we saw everything in its best light, and the reapers reaping late and early.

My father's colleague was the Rev. Robert Day, father of the Rev. Edward Day. Two eminently holy and devoted lives could scarcely present a stronger contrast to each other than did the first Day and the second. The father was the embodiment of beaming, buoyant health, and of cheery objectivity. When we knew him, he was a conductor of cheerfulness wherever he might go. As he rode up to our door in his gleaming, glistening "overalls," on the wildest winter's day, he looked one of Bunyan's "shining ones."

The differences in usage and in dialect between Norfolk and the North Riding were to me a source of eager interest. In Attleborough, my breakfast of bread and milk was set before me, not in a basin, mug, or tin can, but in a well-turned, shapely wooden bowl, and the spoon was not of metal, but of wood. On my saying that I had never tasted such delicious milk before, the reply was: "they say that milk always drinks nicer out of wood than out of pot or tin." On our arrival in New Buckenham, my father was obliged to start to a country

appointment, and the unpacking had to begin forthwith, I was promptly installed as errand-boy, and sent to fetch a pint of milk. Already I had begun to betray that abstraction or mental absenteeism which has been through life such an inconvenience to myself and others, which made my West Riding friends describe me as "*yonderly*." The North Riding phrase is still more expressive: "*Un-come-back*." So what with my zeal and pride of usefulness, and what with my absorption in the new surroundings, I hurried off without a pitcher. "If you please, I've come for a pint of milk," said I. "How much is it?" "Where's thy gotch, baw?" returned the dairyman, with a smile. "My *what*?" said I. Thy *gotch*, *baw*?" he answered, laughing. "Thou can't take a pint o' milk home in thy pocket!" Whereon I shrewdly gathered that "gotch" must mean a Norfolk jug or pitcher; and returning, to my mother's great amusement, asked her for a "gotch." How delighted I was when my mother got me Bloomfield's Poems, to find that this uncouth word "gotch" had found for itself a place in literature. In *Richard and Kate*, the former says to the latter:

"Once, passing by this very tree,
A *gotch* of milk I'd been to fill;
You shoulder'd me, then laugh'd to see
Me and my gotch spin down the hill."

My sister was the cause of no less amusement by asking a shopkeeper for "a *pound* of butter." With a kind of compassionate contempt, the shopkeeper exclaimed: "Why, thou must be a *mawther* from the sheers somewhere; I can let you have a *pint* of butter, if you like." To which she innocently answered: "But I don't want melted butter." We soon found that, in Norfolk, butter was not estimated by weight. We learned afterwards that in the neighbouring county—classic Cambridgeshire,—they sold butter by the "yard." Whereat I was not only amused, but, as Bunyan says, "*put to a muse*." These varieties of usage and of language at first struck me as discrepancies, as if the difference were in the Norfolk *mind*; for it had not occurred to me before that names, and weights and measures were arbitrary and adventitious.

Tea was a costly luxury. Sugar, too, was so dear as to be doled out very sparingly, except to guests. Even "salt" might

not be used, without "prescribing how much," though the duty (which during the war had reached £30 a ton) was abolished in that very year. Butter, too, became a rarity, and salt-sprinkled lard supplied its place.

It is right that Methodist preachers' sons should bear grateful testimony to the quiet household heroism of their mothers' sufferings. I could no longer wonder at, or question the truth of my own recollections of the hardships of my delicate mother's housekeeping in a "dependent Circuit" and an out-of-the-way little agricultural centre—when I heard the late Mr T. P. Bunting's description of the economies of a Methodist minister's house in his own home days, in the richest Circuits in our Conference-towns. In his address, delivered at Beech-Holme, on the education of Wesleyan Ministers' Daughters, he showed how "in influential Circuits in large towns and cities," there was "constant and miserable financial pressure, at the real cost of the minister." The tears brought into my eyes brought no blush upon my cheeks, as I heard him say :—

"I was the happy inmate of a Methodist preacher's home long years ago, and I remember its straits and pinches, and its forced economies, intolerable but for the service which sweetened and sanctified them. My tender lady-mother walked long miles on winter nights, attended by a servant really vastly richer than herself, to buy among the rude throngs of the public market-place, the meat that butchers retailed at famine prices ; and I have seen her—yea, often—throw on the kitchen table a load at which a street-porter now-a-days would grumble, and sit down with a weariness which the poor food she brought home to her husband of delicate appetite, and to her ravenous children, was not likely soon to solace. And, O ! the washing days ! Not merely modern washing days of disorder and disodour, of languid-looking fireplaces, and of the picking of cold bones for dinner, but of hard labour and distress and menial servitude to the very mistress of the house."

If the wife of the great Methodist statesman and preacher of the time found as grave difficulty in balancing income and expenditure, even when subsidized, to some extent, from the genteel home which she had left, as her husband did in managing the Connexional finance, it may readily be believed that the economical genius of the wife of a country minister, with no such adjunct, would be put to a searching test.

To me, it was no hardship that a real *joint* of "butcher's meat" was seldom seen within our house, except at the Christ-

mas Quarterly Meeting dinner, which it was the duty of the chief pastor's wife to prepare and to serve up in the preacher's house, his daughters acting as the handmaids. The minister's family subsisted chiefly on the produce of the kitchen-garden on delicious mother-made sausages, and on dear bread, which, owing, I suppose, to the dampness of the climate and the avoidance of the wasteful and injurious luxury of new bread, not seldom became mildewed.

To my own taste, we fared sumptuously every day ; and I do not think a child cares naturally much for "butcher's meat." Our daintiest viand was an elaborate composition called "medley-pie," or "poor man's goose," consisting mainly of alternate layers of bacon and of apple, with cunningly compounded savoury herbs ; for though we knew little of the "flesh-pots," we had no stint of "leeks and onions." Methodist hospitality, too, though not so pervasive in Norfolk as in Yorkshire, had its rich oases, where we could never wear out welcome. The large fruit gardens of our comfortable friends were always open to us ; though I have often since been reminded—by a sermon which pleased and comforted for the time, but left nothing for the memory to preserve—of the rigidly enforced rule : "Eat what you like, but pocket none." The saddle-bags also seldom came home empty ; the dainty Norfolk cream-cheese being the most memorable contribution ; an agreeable variation on the Dutch cheese to which we were otherwise confined. "Not that I speak in respect of want : " to my taste our *ménage* was magnificent. Had we not luxuries of which Mrs Beeton's barbarous and benighted cookery is entirely ignorant ? What has she to tell of pumpkin-pie and medley-pie, and "scratchings," or "sausage-dumpling," or the "hasty-pudding" which more than compensated for all "the disorder and disodour" of a washing-day ?

My spiritual and mental diet was simple, wholesome, palatable, plenteous. I was indulged in another year of dame-schooling. My new schoolmistress, "Grandmother Bensley," as she was always called ("Grandmother" she was always addressed), presented a most pleasing contrast to her compeer in the north. Dame Bensley, too, was a widow ; and she might have sat for the frontispiece of the most popular religious story of the time : *An Antidote to the Miseries of Human Life*,—a great favourite with my mother—of which the heroine

was *Widow Placid*. Mrs Bensley's countenance stamped itself for ever on my memory as the picture of a saintly sweetness and serenity, which might have been Anglican, or Methodist, or Quaker, or Moravian; so kindly catholic its type. She needed no birch-rod, no harsh or scaring threat. Excepting the dunce-cap, which was only worn once during the year by one little sullen and defiant urchin, she had no punishment but that "of loss."

She had two other sources of income besides tuition. She was a seller of sweetmeats, a much more suitable conjunction, surely, than the far more common one, that of barber, dentist and confectioner. Besides this, she used to spin silk, or some other soft and sheeny thread for some Norwich manufacturer. This was a very popular cottage-industry in Norfolk at that time. The peaceful music of Bloomfield's "humdrum wheel" issued from many an open cottage door. Our gentle school-mistress plied her wheel with her feet, leaving both hands free to manipulate the thread. I thus became familiar with the classic, prehistoric distaff before I met with it in poetry or prose. To the soothing monotony, "the busy hum" of this antique domestic avocation, we learnt our little lessons, which were so light as to leave me ample time to watch the winding process. Every Saturday, on our leaving school, she gave to every well-conducted pupil the only stick she ever pressed into the cause of education—but that a "*black stick*"—for so the long thin piece of toffee awarded to well-behaved children was always called. At the same time, a mild lesson of self-restraint was taught us by putting into the other hand a "spool" of silk or silky-fibre of her own spinning, compelling us to abstain from the toffee till we had carried home the silk.

After I had enjoyed a year of this pet-lamb-like domestication, a very different dispensation dawned upon me. A local preacher opened a school almost directly opposite our house, and to this I was transferred. Of this I will say only that the master would have been all the better for training in some normal institution of which Grandmother Bensley had been the Principal. I never throughout my very varied school-life, experienced, or even witnessed, worse outbursts of unmerited and useless castigation than I was subjected to by my first male teacher. The effect was the evoking in my mind such a dread and hatred of the very thought of school, that the mere

smell of the leather binding of a new school-book is to this day to me one of the most detestable of all effluvia.

But still my most effective education—mental, moral, spiritual—was that which I, almost unconsciously, received at home. There I had three unwearied female teachers,—my mother and the two eldest of my sisters,—and one half-school-mate and half-tutor, my youngest sister. My eldest sister, then seventeen, had come home from boarding-school, where she had been for three successive years, unseen by any member of the family. This was a not at all uncommon thing in those days of costly, risky, inconvenient travelling. The brother of the Rev. Daniel Jackson—my father's colleague during our second year at New Buckenham—an old Kingswood scholar, assured us that throughout his six years at that invaluable institution he had never seen either his father or his mother, and had so completely forgotten their appearance that their personal identity had become a mere matter of trust in testimony. For myself, I had lost all recollection of my sister's features; and her form, of course, had changed, and I was entranced to find her, in manner, speech, and dress: "Beautiful exceedingly, Like a lady from a far countree." I remember perfectly her handsome bonnet of exquisitely-plaited "Tuscan straw," and lovely orange silk. The school was that of which my mother's only sister was the Principal.¹ It was located at Wesley's favourite Lincolnshire village, Tetney, near Cleethorpes. As most of the daughters of well-to-do Lincolnshire Methodist families were educated at this establishment, and their parents were spiritually much indebted, and much attached, to both my father and my grandfather, my sister had the great advantage of association with the highest Methodist circles in the Founder's county, and her influence on me was uplifting and refining.

But still my mother was my chief instructress; and, as this is the history of a mind and heart, I must pay a passing tribute to her training. Her guiding principle in education was happily expressed in a paper on *Infant Education*, which appeared at this very time (January, 1826):—

¹ Afterwards wife of the late Rev. William Wilkinson, and mother of my loved and loving cousins, Edward Towler Wilkinson and Benjamin Gregory Wilkinson, barristers-at-law, and the rest of the energetic, intellectual family of Wilkinsons at York, Leeds, and Chislehurst.

“To *awaken* and *direct* the faculties ; . . . and rather to elicit the child’s own latent ideas than to burden his memory with the ideas of others. The motive is not only to teach, but to develop. The seed contains the whole of a plant, but requires culture to develop it.” My mother’s first appliance for awakening her boy’s faculties and eliciting his ideas was the Nursery Rhyme. It may throw some light on what Max Müller calls “the psychology of the nursery,” to give a few specimens of these leaven germs of practical instruction, and of the way in which they set my little mind *upon the work*, and the way in which some of them have worked from childhood until now.

Of these traditional *save-alls* of the playful wisdom of our ancestors she had indeed a rich museum. I have often thought that, had I time and strength, I should like to give a lesson to little children on the tinned wisdom of the nursery rhyme, after the manner of George Dawson’s thought-arousing lecture on : *Popular Proverbs : Their Wisdom and their Want of it*. Take an example :—

“ As Gaffir Gray, one summer’s day,
Was working in his garden,
Under a stone he found a bone,
And in that bone a farden ” (*farthing*).

Gaffir Gray at once became to me the prototype of a fortunate man. Methought, Why should not I alight upon as wonderful a stroke of luck as this old Gaffir Gray? And I, literally, “left no stone unturned” in our little garden for many a summer’s day, in the hope of alighting upon some such find. But I never even found “a bone,” *let alone* “a farden.” Nevertheless my labour was not lost. By dint of silent pondering (for I kept to myself my secret quest, for fear of being forestalled) I at last picked up a bone that had some nutriment upon it and within it ; and my tiny mental marrow-spoon scooped out a truth that was of more value than many “fardens.” All at once it broke upon my mind that Gaffir Gray did not come upon the hidden treasure whilst he was idling about, picking up or kicking up bits of barren stone ; “he was *working*.” Moreover, “he was working in *his* garden.” He was not encroaching on or envying the property of his neighbours, but honestly working on his own. *Lesson* : The way of duty is not only the way of safety,

but also the way of *success*. One is likelier to happen on a good find whilst following one's own regular, homely path than when trespassing on that of some one else. "Under a *stone* he found a bone, And in that *bone* a farden." *Moral*: Good hap does not always lie upon the surface; and an obstacle sometimes conceals an advantage. Do not hastily cast aside everything that seems to be in *your way*. Had Gaffir Gray peevishly flung away the bone without inspection, he would have flung away the "farden" also. You say: Well, it was but a "farden" that he found at last, and what is that to make a fuss about? Ah! that is the last but not the least lesson of the little apologue. Be thankful for small successes. The thankful heart is the finding heart. Besides, at that time, a farthing was as common as a half-penny is now, and I had no regular pocket-money whatever.

It must not be supposed that my father took small interest in, and contributed but little to, the unfolding, training, and enrichment of my mind in its early shootings forth. Though away from home three-fourths of every month, he took delight in grave and gentle converse with his eldest boy. Yet he did little more than insinuate instruction in the form of thought-provoking question or heart-awaking anecdote. "Come here, Ben," he would say, "I want to tell thee a little tale." So I should set my tiny wooden tripod at his feet and listen for the oracle. The "little tale" would often be a Scripture-story such as this: "There was a little city, and few men within it; and there came a great king against it, and besieged it, and built great bulwarks against it. Now there was found in it a poor wise man, and he by his wisdom delivered the city; yet no man remembered that same poor man." "What was his name, father?" I asked. "Ay, Ben! that's just it: 'no man remembered' so much as even his name." Then all "the milk of human kindness" in my little breast boiled over, and I felt: I only wish I had those "few men" in my hands for awhile; wouldn't I make 'em remember!

My father, though grave enough in aspect and in bearing to have sat for a portrait of the ideal Puritan divine, was yet, like most of those so much misconceived worthies, replete with *bonhomie*; and he overflowed, at nightfall, with amusing anecdote and interesting incident. He could laugh and make to laugh.

I should be chargeable with gross ingratitude if I could forget the chief agents in the evoking of my sensibilities and faculties at this plastic period. Foremost amongst these I must recognise the peasant-poet of East Anglia, Robert Bloomfield, concerning whom the scholarly Kirke White pronounced the prophetic epigram : "While *field* shall *bloom*, thy name shall live."

"We're made so that we love

First, when we see them painted, things that we have passed
Perhaps a hundred times, nor cared to see."

So Bloomfield's honest, hearty picturings of country-life, and rural scenery, and rustic personages, awoke in me a tendency to instinctively observe and pleasurably contemplate all the varieties of the *genus homo* that came within my ken ; and that to such an extent that almost every individual with whom I became acquainted was to me a sort of *character* ; and I do not remember ever meeting with an uninteresting person. In my childhood I unconsciously *took stock* of every one I came in contact with, noting his differentiation, and assigning each his place in my ever-growing gallery. This tendency has been to me through life a never-failing source of enjoyment and enlivenment ; and the itinerancy has afforded ample scope for its indulgence. Moreover, it has proved a wholesome and not unnecessary corrective to an unhealthy subjectivity and self-consciousness into which I must otherwise have fallen.

The *Methodist Magazine* and the *Youth's Instructor*, especially the poetry in both, still played an influential part in my mental history. The bard whose verses at this time most frequently appeared in our periodicals was the mild Quaker minstrel, Bernard Barton. Though inferior in poetic power to some other members of that kindly, meditative community, though lacking the delicate, subtle thoughtfulness of Wiffen, the fine lyrical enthusiasm of Whittier, the straightforward strength of William Howitt, and the sparkling spontaneity of Mary Howitt, yet he was entrusted with a most serviceable gift of song, which he laid out to the best advantage. Some of his lines, learnt in my early childhood, are still to me as fresh as ever, though I have never seen them since. I cannot walk by the sea-side on a moonlight night without thinking of his *Soliloquy*, read in one of our periodicals :—

“What is Love? If earthly only,
Like a meteor of the night,
Shining but to leave more lonely
Those who hail its transient light.

“But if calm, refined, and tender,
Purified from Passion’s stain,
*Like the moon, in gentle splendour,
Shining on the peaceful main.”*

Two lines of an anonymous poem, learnt in early boyhood, also occur to me at such times, recalled by the felicity of one descriptive epithet: “Wide over the *tremulous* sea, The moon spread her mantle of light.”

It was through the Wesleyan Methodist Magazines of this period, too, that I first became familiar with the tender, humanising, hallowing strains of Mrs Hemans: first of all with her *Hour of Prayer*. Here, too, I first met with her touching *Graves of a Household*; her noble, thought-awakening, heart-affecting ode *The Illuminated City*; and her bright lyric: “How many thousands are wakening now!” Here also were seen the richest compositions of Heber, Milman, Croly, Bowring, Montgomery and William and Mary Howitt. These “Pieces” were extracted from the “Annuals”: a class of fashionable periodicals at that time very much in vogue, and of very great utility. The compositions of the then young Howitts which found their way into the Magazine were in poetic power quite equal, and in depth and loftiness and livingness of Christian feeling and conviction far superior to anything they wrote in later years.

These poems were not just read and cast aside, but re-read, conversed upon, and kept as household treasures. The most striking of them were committed to memory by my sister Sarah, who was never weary of repeating, nor I of listening to them on our evening strolls. Happily, at New Buckenham, as at Pickering, there was a grand old castle, just outside the town, a few minutes distance from our house. It stood upon a lofty, wooded mound, a spiral walk surrounding and ascending it. It was little frequented by the public, except during hard and long-continued frost, when the crowds of skaters upon the moat, which was still complete, presented the most animated spectacle I had ever seen. To this romantic grove my sister loved to take me on the summer evenings, and pour

forth her stores of poetry or narrative. For tales of travel, too, formed part of the bill of fare in the *Magazine* and *Youth's Instructor*, the latter enlivened by engravings. Then, too, the *Missionary Notices* accompanied the *Magazine*, bearing fruit every month—like the trees of Paradise; with their thrilling news from Labrador and the South Sea Islands, from the East and West Indies, from South Africa and North America, from Sweden and from Palestine; seeming to show all seasons at one time, and all climates in one place. Thus my first notions of geography were vividly and charmingly connected with the struggles and successes of the Kingdom of Christ; the martyr and the missionary thus became the heroes of my imagination and my heart. The details of the missionary Trelfall's murder thrilled and fired me. A halo glowed around the names of William Shaw, Barnabas Shaw, Dr Cook, Elijah Hoole, Bridgnell, Samuel Allen, Felvus, James Dixon, Peter Duncan, Roberts, Dowson, Cheesewright, Robert Young, Walter Lawry, Piggott, Lynch, Haddy, Ellidge, Shrewsbury, Squance, Croggon, Benjamin and William Clough, Rayner, Stephenson, Lewis, Raby, Hindson, Banks, Hyde, Horton, Hume and Stinson. A golden glory seemed to rim their portraits. In after years I looked upon their sons with an interest akin to homage, when so many of them were my school-fellows or my pupils, or first the one and then the other. I indulged an honest pride when I found myself associated with these very worthies themselves in Mission advocacy on many a platform; with some of the very best of them as their colleague in the Home-work, and with the rest in the frankest intimacies of social life. It would be hard to overestimate my indebtedness to the *Missionary Notices*, as a kind of picturesque Primers, not only of Christian Geography and contemporary Church History, but also of Christian sentiment and sympathy.

The little town could boast a tidy Circulating Library, from which my mother culled the choicest and most wholesome dainties for our home consumption; for elegant and entertaining literature seemed to her, and became to some of her children, as one of the necessities of life.

But the great literary event of our sojourn in New Buckenham was the arrival from *the Book-Room* of a book-parcel of abnormal size, containing volumes which greatly swelled our

store of recreative reading. We owed this to one of those ill winds which are sure to blow some good to some one. The Book-Room had so lavishly subsidised the various funds of the Connexion as to almost exhaust its working capital. In order to extricate the Department, the Brethren had imposed upon themselves the obligation to purchase five pounds worth of volumes, selected from a catalogue of books on hand. My parents chose Coke's *History of the West Indies*, Gambold's *Poems*, Henry, *Earl of Moreland*, and Clarke's *Wesley Family*, with its frontispiece of Epworth Church, where our own father and mother had been married. My father's library was richly but almost exclusively theological. But now Clarke's *Wesley Family* supplied the preacher's family with delightful reading for many "evenings at home"; the rare intrinsic interest of the book being much enhanced by many a lingering and amusing comment and illustrative incident from father or from mother, whose residence in Epworth had familiarised them with the peculiar features of the Isle of Axholme, and the characteristics of its strangely mingled people. Then was lighted up an eager interest in all that relates to the origin and the history of Methodism which has never died down to the present hour. Then we had Gambold's Drama on *the Martyrdom of Polycarp* and his Wordsworthian little poem: "So many years I've seen the sun." There appeared in the *Youth's Instructor* a picture of Stanton Harcourt. The impression made by Gambold's poems on my mind was so deep and so abiding as to send me on a pilgrimage thirty years afterwards from Oxford to the secluded village where the mystic Methodist had mused so profoundly, and sung with so much sweetness and strength.

Meantime my religious training continued to be of the delicate, tentative, observant, I might almost say, reverential kind which I have described already. Two attractive-looking little books were put into my hand: Wesley's *Instructions for Children*, and Janeway's *Token for Children*. They are both very notable productions. The former is highly characteristic both of Wesley and of Methodism. It is wonderfully eclectic, consisting chiefly of selections from two strongly contrasted French divines: the Roman Catholic Abbé Fleury, and the transcendental mystic Poiret. It is dedicated "to all parents and schoolmasters" as containing "the true principles of the

Christian education of children, which should, in all reason, be instilled into them as soon as they can distinguish good from evil." This Wesley pronounces to be superior "for *depth of sense* and plainness of language, to anything in the English tongue." An early Conference had directed: "Give the children the *Instructions for Children*, and encourage them to get them by heart. Indeed, you will find it no easy matter to teach the principles of religion. So true is the remark of Archbishop Ussher: 'The laying the foundation skilfully, as it is of the greatest importance, so it is the masterpiece of the wisest builder. And let the wisest of us all try whenever we please, we shall find that to lay this ground-work rightly . . . will put us to the trial of all our skill.'"

Now, my father and mother—being thorough Wesleyan-Methodists, and rightly judging from their own observation and experience, that the best thing they could possibly do for their children, and for the community as affected by them, was to put them in the fairest possible way for becoming thorough Wesleyan-Methodists themselves—kept this injunction both in the letter and the spirit. They "gave" me the *Instructions for Children*, and encouraged me "to get them by heart." For my part I did what my parents thought my bonnie little best to achieve a *memoriter* mastery of the preliminary catechetical, on the principle of "*Divide* and conquer," starting with a sentence at a time, and sauntering on at as leisurely a pace as that of Jacob's little ones and lambs on the earlier stages of the border-march into the Promised Land.

But my interest soon began to flag. Sooth to say the earliest sections were little more than a formulation of truths which had already become to me *facts*. Take, for example, the lesson on *Creation*. Had I not learnt that in many ways, at Family Prayer, from Scripture reading, from conversation, and from hymns? The subsequent lessons I found more remarkable for "*depth of sense*" than for "*plainness of language*"; especially those on the regulation of the desires, the understanding, the passions, and the conduct. When, however, it was found that the learning these paragraphs by rote was an irksome, servile task, I was relieved. However, the latter part of the directions in the *Minutes* was not neglected. "Choose some of the weightiest points, and try if they understand them. . . . Often with the question suggest the answer. . . . Where

you perceive they do not understand the *stress* of your question, *lead* them into it by other questions." This shrewd idea of putting "*leading* questions," such as those by which an astute barrister elicits from a witness the reply he wants to get, was afterwards well wrought out by Emily Taylor in her capital suggestions as to the teaching of children.

The experimental part of these *Instructions* was thoroughly rubbed into my intelligence, with gentle, persevering application, and with the grateful aromatic oil of kindness and sympathy. I not only learnt the nature, but obtained the gift of true *Repentance* as there defined: "Being thoroughly convinced of our sinfulness, guilt and helplessness." The endeavour was like that of Wesley at Savannah, "to fix something in the understanding as well as the memory."

Janeway's *Token for Children* (Wesley's abridged edition) was, for the same reason, soon reduced from the rank of a lesson-book to a basis for religious conversation. My home-instruction in religion could not be justly called *inculcation*: it was neither stamped nor tramped, neither rammed nor crammed into me by mere memory. Even Moses says: "My doctrine shall *distil* as the dew." Thus gently did Christ's doctrine percolate my soul.

At my own request I was permitted to attend the Sunday school, but one morning's experience was quite enough for me. My entrance-examination consisted of a rough estimate of my inches. I was placed under the tuition of a rude farmer's man of about forty winters, "dressed in" a dead-blue coat and waist-coat, the cordiest of corduroys, and "a little brief authority." The science of Sunday school teaching had not yet found its way to this little agricultural centre; there was no geniality, no sympathy, no enlivenment. The only lesson I learnt there was what Wordsworth calls "a wise passiveness." After an hour and a half of the dullest mental drudgery, of Sabbath desecration in the shape of "servile work," I informed my gruff preceptor that my mother bade me go and sit with her in the preacher's pew. This was interpreted into a clerical claim, a hierarchical pretension too Popish to be listened to. I was bluntly told: "If the preacher's son comes to Sunday school he must sit at chapel with the other scholars." So I was marched up to the back of the gallery, without the slightest breathing space between school and service, and made to

“squat” like a little “pagod” on a form much too high to allow my feet to touch the ground. Had a just now celebrated Roman Catholic writer seen that row of small confessors balancing ourselves awkwardly upon the board which seemed to be of one piece with our teacher’s sympathies, he could not have described Methodism as destitute of the “wholesome discipline of penance.” If one of the “Holy Innocents” showed a deficient appreciation of his martyrdom, by restlessness of movement, or audible readjustment of his posture, the big Methodist hymn-book in our teacher’s hand was put to a purpose for which it was not intended by either poets or compilers. A resonant rap on the uneasy urchin’s head gave him rude admonition “with hymns and spiritual songs.” By the close of the sermon my poor little limbs were so cramped by their constrained position, that they had great difficulty in supporting me during the last singing, and in bearing me home when the youngest class brought up the rear of the dispersing congregation.

In 1826 I was deeply impressed by a service conducted at the New Buckenham market-cross by an eloquent young local-preacher from Diss. Of the sermon I remember nothing but its impassioned, unconventional and arresting delivery. It was the last hymn that told upon me: “Sinners, turn, why will ye die?”—by reason of the manly, unaffected elocution with which the pleading pathos of that grand rythmical appeal was sent home to our hearts. Through a long ministry the giving out of the hymns has proved one of the most effective parts of my feeble ministrations, covering and compensating for a multitude of inefficiencies. “What a power that hymn-book of yours gives you in the pulpit!” said Alexander Maclaren to me, at Southampton, long ago. Methodist preachers little reck what a potency they let slip by not “giving out” the hymns.

The last night of the year 1826 was “a night much to be remembered” by me. I had cleared my sixth birthday. My elder sisters were eager to attend the Watchnight, which my father was appointed to conduct. My mother was confined to bed by illness, so I was left in charge of the house for three hours and a half: the Watchnight, in those years, never beginning later than nine o’clock. My sole companion was a book of my own choosing. I had no tendency to drowsiness, having

drunk a cup of coffee with the rest. Indeed "the sage berry Mocha yields" must have awoke an unwonted cerebral activity. No doubt my father's prayer at family worship had been even more solemn and tender than it was wont to be. Alone, for the first time in my life, in the still night, I sunk into a profound thoughtfulness. I found myself face to face with my own inalienable individuality, as an awesome spiritual entity, which could never cease to be. I trembled in the presence of my own greatness, and at the mystery of my own being. I saw and felt myself to be the heir to infinite responsibilities and eternal ages, and a grand and fearful choice between happiness and misery, perfection or undoing, unmeasured and unending. I stood at the parting of the ways, between Gerizim and Ebal: and I prayed for grace to make my choice.

I was the subject of no violent emotional excitement, being calm enough to embody my thoughts and feelings in a little hymn, by the tenor of which those thoughts and feelings may partly be recalled. *Partly*; because I was obliged to avail myself of reminiscences of learnt hymns to give myself a start; and the flow of thought was of course affected by the necessities of rhyme. That childish composition shows that, next to the sense of my own spiritual personality, was that of the flight of time and the unescapable approach of "the Four Last Things": Death, Judgement, Heaven and Hell. But this crisis in my soul-life is best described in the verses of the one hundred and nineteenth Psalm, which I chose forty-six years afterwards as the text of a Watchnight address at City Road chapel, London: "I entreated Thy favour with my whole heart: be merciful unto me according to Thy word. I thought on my ways, and turned my feet unto Thy testimonies. I made haste, and delayed not to keep Thy commandments. At midnight I gave thanks unto Thee, . . . because of Thy righteous judgments." In truth, the key-note of my infant-meditation was that of the ancient psalm of well-instructed youth: "Thy hands have made me and fashioned me: give me understanding that I may learn Thy commandments." It was an aspiration after the holiness and happiness which I saw, in all its heavenly, homely, winning beauty, depicted in my parents' lives. I saw not "from far," but close to, its "beauteous light," and inly sighed for its repose. Like the youth in the psalm, I began with the feeling: "Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who

walk in the law of the Lord": and like him I closed with the confession and entreaty: "I have gone astray like a lost sheep; seek Thy servant; for I do not forget Thy commandments." The Good Shepherd heard His bleating lamb: He gathered me in His arms and folded me in His bosom.

In the deep night silence I heard a knock. It did not startle, much less scare me; for even then I knew it well. It was urgent and importunate, though gentle and with listening pauses. It was followed by a Voice still and small, but spiritually audible. Reverently and trustfully I opened the door, and the Divine Caller came in and supped with me, and I with Him.

The *Instructions for Children*, and the whole tenor of my home-teaching had made it plain to me that saving Faith is "a conviction that Christ has loved *me*, and given Himself for *me*." This conviction I enjoyed, and "by faith" I had peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ.

The next day I rehearsed to my mother my little hymn, and then, at his bidding, to my father. When I told them that it expressed my own convictions and resolves, their gladness was affecting to behold. My mother's face bespoke the inward exclamation: "What, my son, and what, the son of my vows!" and my father's said more speakingly than words: "My son, if thine heart be wise, my heart shall be glad, even mine. Yea, my reins shall rejoice when thy lips speak right things."

Thirty-nine years afterwards the superintendent of that Circuit kindly wrote to inform me that the oldest members of the Society at Spooner Row still talked with delight of my father's preaching there one Sunday morning in a state of wonderful elation. On the people's expressing their surprise at his unwonted elevation, he replied: "My little son has given his heart to God."

The first contemporary historical event which I can now recall was connected with an important element of my home-schooling, which has proved to be enduringly effective. That event was the death of the Duke of York in January 1827. What impressed it so deeply on my mind was the gravity and sadness with which my father announced to us the tidings, and the solemnity and humiliation with which the day of his funeral was observed in our little homestead. Nature itself

seemed to put on mourning, in sympathy with the nation's grief. A sombre drapery of cloud was stretched across the sky, made all the more funereal by a strange and spectral light which rendered "darkness visible." The scene has never faded from my memory. Its association with my training arose from my father's explanation of his own and of the nation's sorrow. The Duke had been the great popular champion of Protestantism, and his death was regarded as the falling of a standard-bearer on the field of battle. This event was made the occasion of the first of a series of fireside lessons on the evils and dangers of Roman Catholicism, both to the individual soul and to the national freedom and prosperity. We were made to see how Popery hung like a blight over every nation which it had succeeded in subjecting to its will, and that in proportion to the extent of its influence.

From this period till the passing of the Roman Catholic Relief Bill, in 1829, Roman Catholicism was the most prominent subject before the public mind. Happily for us, the topic was discussed by our parents in the most temperate and judicial tone. We were taught to discriminate between Roman Catholicism and Roman Catholics, between the system and its adherents. Our teaching in this, as in other matters, was purely Wesleyan. We were instructed to admire and emulate the intense devotion, the spirituality and heavenly-mindedness, and the heroic self-sacrifice of such saintly characters as Pascal, Gregory Lopez, Thomas à Kempis, and De Renty. Yet Popery itself was shown to be a monstrous intrusion between the soul and the Saviour, as well as the sworn and unscrupulous enemy of a nation's freedom and prosperity. I thus escaped the two educational errors, to one or both of which is traceable the entanglement in the toils of Popery of the very few Methodists who have surrendered themselves to its seductive spells: first and strongest, one-sided and indiscriminating and unsparing denunciation of the Church of Rome, provoking a perilous reaction, as if in reparation of a wrong; and second, an unreadiness to detect the specious sophisms under which that Church conceals the effrontery of its claims.

As we took no newspaper, daily or weekly, London or Provincial (Methodist newspaper there was no such thing!), all these matters were conversed upon without exasperation or

undue excitement. Nevertheless, I became a most pronounced Protestant. The only work of art I ever executed—except the dwarfs of dough, with currants for eyes, which my frugal mother let me mould so wastefully on baking-days, and the *putty* men (not *pretty*, though that word was so pronounced at that time and place), which good-natured glaziers allowed me to model—was a Guy, carved with a pocket-knife out of a huge field-turnip, with daubs of black paint for eyes and brows, and of red paint for mouth and for “complexion.” This I bore about the streets on the 5th of November, receiving gibes and coppers in an almost equal proportion.

My father's term at New Buckenham expiring in 1827, he was appointed to North Walsham in the same county. Although the distance was so short, the scarcity and slowness of public conveyances compelled us to spend a night in Norwich. This was to me a most welcome obligation, as I was taken to see the cathedral, with the stately beauty of which I was as much smitten as I had been impressed two years before with the massive grandeur of York Minster. Dr Chalmers, in writing an account of a tour in England, makes use of a word which vividly expresses the *veni-vidi-vici* feeling with which, from childhood, I have gazed upon and appropriated—*made my own*—in a most real and substantive sense, every goodly edifice, every lovely landscape, every surpassingly beautiful or majestic human form or “face Divine” on which my eyes have rested for a while. The great Scotch preacher thus strikingly describes the feeling of enrichment with which he bade farewell to Lincolnshire: “Lincoln Cathedral and Boston Church were great acquisitions.” And so, to my eager, wondering little spirit, York Minster and Norwich Cathedral were veritable “*acquisitions*.” And the intellectual giant Chalmers did not more lightly bear back with him across the Tweed the mighty piles that dominate the lowlands of Lincolnshire than did the small itinerant carry along with him his triumphal annexations.

I was sent to the leading day school in the town, of which the Principal was a local preacher named Crickmore, though the little town could boast a famous boarding-school, where Lord Nelson had been educated. Mr Crickmore had also boarders, some from London. He had little about him of the dominee or pedagogue. He was cheerful and facetious, good-

humoured and affectionate. He prided himself on never using a cane; but he resorted to a variety of fantastic corporal tortures, very diverting to all but the unlucky subject; and some of them much harder to bear than a good sound flogging would have been. One of these was to make the culprit stretch himself full length upon a form, with books or blocks of wood, prepared for the purpose, upon his toes and upon his brow. These, of course, came down with a clatter on the slightest movement of the sufferer's body, subjecting him to degradation in class, bad marks, diminished chance of a prize, "impositions" or detention during play-hours. It was capital practice in the art of lying still, and was remarkably deterrent, as it made one both look and feel very silly, and was tiresome in the extreme. This I can testify from painful experience, my misdemeanour being inattention. For I was what Lord Bacon calls "bird-witted"; my bump of *Concentration* being as yet imperfectly developed, and my mind always going off at a tangent, and following some train of thought on my own account, or lured by some beckoning and bewitching fancy.

I am sorry to confess that I took very little interest in my schooling, far less than in my schoolfellows, whom I remember with much greater vividness and distinctness than any one of my acquirements in the schoolroom. For one thing, it was then that I took my first lessons in penmanship, at which my inaptitude almost amounted to ineptitude. My clumsiness in the formation of pothooks, upstrokes and downstrokes, was matter for commiseration, and not for the heartless but seemingly irresistible amusement of my teachers and schoolfellows alike. I would fain persuade myself that a *gaucherie* so astonishing that it might almost pass for genius, was really the result of the deplorable self-diffidence with which it was accompanied. I had the profoundest impression that "my right hand" had no native "cunning" to "forget." And I was almost as ungainly at Arithmetic. But the chief cause of this repugnance to schooling, conceived by an eagerly acquisitive young mind, was the fact that no attempt was made to render the dry rudiments of knowledge attractive, much less alluring, but rather to justify and emphasise the saying: "The root of learning is bitter, though the fruit is sweet." So we were not served with even the succulent, nutritious stalk of learning, carefully peeled and judiciously stewed and sugared, but were

condemned to masticate and swallow the dried root of knowledge, which, however tonic and medicinal, was often "bad to take." So, like Shakespeare's typical boy, I might be seen

"With shining, morning face,
Creeping, like snail, unwillingly to school";

and was glad enough of any trivial ailment which maternal tenderness might construe into a sufficient pretext for keeping me at home.

But one morning I received a double lesson: against *old-soldier-playing* and untidiness. I had been allowed to try whether a slight cold would yield to the pleasant treatment of sitting by the fire and reading a delightful book, when to my consternation Mr Crickmore himself was shown into the room. He had been giving lessons in a ladies' school close by, and on his way back kindly called to relieve his solicitude as to his little pupil's health. Having admirably played the part of medical practitioner by a gravely gentle manipulation of the wrist and temples, and by a sagacious inspection of the tongue, he hastened to assure my mother that there was "no immediate danger"; so far from it that a little walk, under a careful escort, would doubtless prove a complete restorative; and that he would himself undertake the responsibility of seeing me as far as the school, and of providing against the event of my feeling unequal to the walk home again. But, as we descended the steps into the street, he noticed that the lace of one of my boots was trailing in the dust. Whereupon, having the true Norfolk sentiment of neatness, he seized hold of my lace, and kept hold of it, and compelled me to measure by forced hops the whole distance between home and school. So the quiet little town, as well as the unquiet little boy, was treated to a new spectacle and a new sensation. Here was the leading local preacher driving before him "the preacher's" blubbering son, like a little pig with a straw band round its leg! This one-legged pilgrimage he relentlessly compelled me to accomplish, not only to the door, but all the way up to my place in the schoolroom, taking a merciless advantage of my case to give a lesson in orthography: "Here's Master Gregory, '*Hopping* to see *you* well, as *he* is *at this present*'": a perversion of the usual formula with which a rustic letter-writer closed a communication to a friend.

During our later life at New Buckenham our friends the Raysons lost a relative who left them a set of *The Lady's Magazine*, a periodical devoted chiefly to highly sentimental stories or pieces of romantic poetry. Now, as their unstinted hospitality to the preacher's children extended to mental as well as bodily provision, a new style of literature was introduced to the preacher's house. Though morally unexceptionable, and, indeed, in most respects, high-toned, improving, and refined, it was spiritually and practically unhelpful and unhealthful, having about it the feverish flush of a sort of subtropical sentimentalism. Thus was generated a taste for a kind of literary confectionery which could not nourish a robust fibre either of the mind or heart. At that time, too, a seductive system of colportage was in vogue. Fascinating tales were published in monthly "parts" or "numbers," pleasantly printed, and each with a beautiful engraving. These were brought to the door by itinerant vendors, who pushed their wares with much persuasiveness. Two of these tales my sisters had induced my mother to allow them to "take in": first, *Fatherless Fanny*, and then, *The Mysterious Marriage*. These, too, contained nothing at all positively objectionable, but they were more like the North-Riding stories "about luv an' syke like," than the East-Riding volumes, "about the Looard an' things"; and they did not, like *Henry, Earl of Moreland*, seek to combine the two themes. The last-named book was discreetly kept out of my way; no doubt on account of the prurient descriptions of "the pleasures of sin" which precede the details of their tragic issues. I was, of course, supposed not to read or to feel the slightest interest in the others. Nevertheless, they took a strong hold on my imagination. The old numbers of *The Lady's Magazine* fell about us like the wind-borne flock of quails around the Israelitish camp; but the new-fangled novels were like the deceitful bakemeats of some huxtering heathen, smuggled into a Levite's tent. However much they gratified our imaginative palate, they "sent leanness into the soul."

Up to this time, though of frail physique, my enjoyment of life had been intense. Since my babyhood I had known nothing of illness, excepting a most kindly visitation of measles, which treated me so blandly, with its accompaniment of oranges and jam, and delicious drinks and immunity from school, and

assiduous ministrations, that my disappointment was severe when told that measles only come once in a lifetime. I should have welcomed an annual return. On the whole, no boy could more heartily sing :—

“ I thank the goodness and the grace
That on my birth have smiled,
And made me, in these Christian days,
A *happy, English child*.”

There could scarcely be a happier child than the little preacher's son, who was so proud of his parentage and his position. But now came one sure symptom of an overwrought nervous system—an unnatural sleeplessness. And the remedy resorted to only aggravated the disease. My indulgent sister Sarah would sit beside my bed by the hour, and pour forth all her stores of poetry. Most of her favourite pieces were religiously impressive, or, at least, morally didactic ; but some were most unsoothing and unsedative, such as : Southey's *Mary the Maid of the Inn*, and Monk Lewis' ghastly composition : *Alonzo the Brave*. These metrical stories exerted on my fancy a weird fascination, and I snatched “ a fearful joy ” as the phantasmagoria moved across the stage of my imagination. This treatment changed sleeplessness into somnambulism. One night, as mother and sisters were at supper, they were startled by pattering footsteps upon the stairs, which descended straight into the sitting-room, the opposite door opening directly on the street—so primitive was the arrangement of the house. Before they could recover from their wonder, I entered the room (so they told me afterwards) with fixed, wide-open eyes, and without taking note of any one made directly for the outer door, which I began to open. Very wisely they did not attempt to wake me, but gently led me to the fireside, gave me a draught of coffee, then took me back to bed. This nocturnal activity continued for about a fortnight, and then left me at once and for ever. I myself knew nothing about these demonstrations, either at the time or on the morrow ; nor had I the faintest recollection of perturbed sleep.

A capital corrective of this over-stimulating mental pabulum was found in the delightful little volume, *Original Poems*, by Jane and Ann Taylor. Nothing that I ever read had such a powerful effect in drawing out and directing my moral

sensibilities as had these delectable productions. Their piquant presentation of the minor moralities of ordinary life, their humorous and hearty exposure of juvenile obliquities, as exemplified in such life-like characters as *Greedy Dick* and *Meddlesome Mattie*; their early calling up of the most genuine human sympathies, as in *Little Anne and her Mother*; and their broadcast sowing of honest, healthy sentiment, as in *Honest John Tomkins, the Hedger and Ditcher*, did me much good.

Happily for me, my home-training based sound moral sentiment on the solid substructure of the fear and love of God. Happily for me, I say, my filial relationship to God as my Father, Judge, and the Source at once of morality and my own being, and the eternal Enforcer of the sanctions of morality—was set before me at the very first, and kept before me constantly. And it is my full conviction, after the reading, experience and observation of more than sixty years, that there is no other vital root of true morality, for time or for eternity.

At North Walsham I was permitted to make another trial of the Sunday school. Here, certainly, there was neither coarseness nor harshness to complain of, and we were taught the virtues of "obedience and reverence"; but there was nothing winsome in the mode of teaching.

At North Walsham I first enjoyed the privilege of seeing and hearing "the Missionary Deputation," in the person of a very rememberable minister who had attained Connexional celebrity under the name of Captain Hawtrey. He had been an officer in the army, and had seen sharp service. He retained his military bearing, and had a most imposing presence. A captain who had entered the Methodist Ministry a few weeks after Waterloo, and who possessed great oratorical powers, was sure to be immensely popular. His speech at North Walsham was the first display of platform eloquence I had ever witnessed, and it was to me enchantment. In robust and dignified humour, and in pictorial vividness, I have never known it surpassed. Its most effective passage was a thrilling description of an Indian widow-burning, which he seemed to see, as he was speaking, and made us all see, in all its heart-rending details. The speech so impressed me that I felt quite competent to reproduce it, when, years afterwards, I was asked to take part in the Boys' Missionary Meeting at Wood-

house-Grove. The other speakers took their orations bodily from the reports of the great Exeter Hall speeches in this Magazine, or fell back upon their fathers for a deliverance worthy of the occasion and the theme. The Chairman, in some cases, with more irony, I fear, than naïveté, congratulated the boy-orators on the marvellous manifestation of hereditary genius. This, of course, was uproariously cheered by the compeers, who had seen them "get it off." But such was "the pride and naughtiness" of my boyish heart, that I thought scorn of retailing what was already in print; and, knowing that the Reverend Captain had been persuaded by his Anglican lady to take Episcopalian orders, I felt few qualms of conscience at borrowing from him that jewel of a speech, which he was not likely ever to reclaim. At that time, I fear, I regarded plagiarism as a sort of Spartan theft, which was disgraceful if found out only.

My father's ministry in North Walsham Circuit was much blessed, as our leading friends at Cromer told me when I visited that charming watering-place. The trustees of the town chapel were obliged to increase the accommodation by erecting a gallery. But a fierce attack of ague, followed up by the savage surgery of the time, brought him so low that a removal to his native air was declared to be necessary. I myself saw him bled most barbarously by the provincial practitioner.

CHAPTER III

THE EARLY EDUCATION OF A PREACHER'S SON

NEVER, in my life, did I see a man so elated as my father was when the *First Draft of the Stations* reached us, announcing his appointment to Ashby-de-la-Zouch. For the first time in twenty-nine years of ministry he found himself stationed in his native neighbourhood. He fairly leaped for joy. But, alas! the "corrected copy" was accompanied by a letter from his Representative, stating that at the third reading of the Stations, a complication had arisen which could only be solved by the removal of his name from Ashby to Patrington. This was a sore disappointment; but there was no help for it. My own feelings found expression in "Farewell Lines" addressed to my schoolfellows. It must be noted that my father was a popular composer of acrostics, elegies, wedding-hymns, and hymns for anniversaries, several of which were published, but many more preserved as souvenirs in the families by whom he had been entertained, and whom he had regaled in turn with things new and old from his unfailing stores of narrative and recitation. On my last day at Mr Crickmore's school he suddenly called me to his desk, and with gravely knitted brow, perplexingly belied by the twinkle in his eye, demanded of me solemnly: "Why, Gregory, they say that you've been scraping on your father's fiddle! Get up on this form, sir, and let us have those *Farewell Lines* you've been making for us."

So, lending me a lift, he stuck me on high before my compeers, and made me declaim my childish tinkle, tinkle! This, of course, called forth an outburst of comical enthusiasm. As he helped me down he slipped into my hand a piece of money many times more value than any I had ever owned before. Thereby he thoughtlessly incurred a grave responsibility. He awoke within me an uncontrollable ambition for poetic achievement. "I bridled in my struggling muse in vain." In about two years my compositions had become numerous enough to be

collected into a little brown-paper-covered, pin-fastened manuscript book, of which my good-natured critic-schoolfellows (from whom I vainly tried to hide it) justly told me the title, *Dawnings of Poetical Genius!* was the only promising part.

Before I quit Norfolk I must note a few local peculiarities. People in our position never used coal in the sitting-room, but always *peat*, for the burning of which the fire-place was adapted. My mother, perhaps from early association, much preferred it, as giving forth a more genial, grateful, gentle heat, with comparatively little smoke, and as requiring less attention, because of its slowness of combustion. Peat stacks formed a striking feature of the rural landscape.

The deeply embayed fireplace in many a tidy, cosy Norfolk home was made to serve the purpose of a charming course of Scripture history, being lined with Dutch tiles, bearing deep blue figures on a ground of glossy white, representing the successive scenes in Gospel narrative, forming a pictorial Harmony of the four Evangelists. These quaint, antique, yet arresting and attractive pictures were kept as clean and bright as the encaustic patterns on the pavement of a cathedral apse. Thus the life of our Lord was ever before the eyes of a Christian household, all flashing to the kindly, lambent flicker of the home-fire; and the Magi knelt before the Babe, and the cattle fed beside, and the Christ-bearing ass still held on its way to Egypt, and the boy Jesus fixed His meekly questioning look on the countenance of the wondering rabbis, and mothers clustered with their little ones around the Christ, and spikenard streamed from Mary's broken vase, and seemed to fill the house with the delicate, delicious "odour of the ointment," whilst the Crucifixion, the Entombment, the Resurrection, the Ascension, were for ever transpiring and for ever present; and the hearth place was the Holy Land. To me these homely paintings, with their pure tone of glittering white and of cerulean blue, are associated with the form and face of some comely, comfortable East Anglian matron, the picture and perfection of all neatness and propriety, whose Chair of Scripture History was chintz-covered and soft-cushioned, and whose prelections were enriched by currant-cake and milk fresh-foaming from the cow.

The cottage-homes of Methodist skilled workmen—where we were always welcomed—seemed sanctuaries of comfort and

of cleanliness, with their trim front-gardens, rich in London pride, sweet-williams, gilly-flowers, carnations, and with their diamond-paned and leaded casements.

The yearly fair was a season of solicitude to ministers and class-leaders and Sunday school teachers, and a testing time to converts. Sermons, prayers, and Society and Sunday school addresses were all brought to bear upon the perils of these annual saturnalia. It was a veritable *Vanity Fair*. Its features had not softened in the least since the days of the merry Monarch and the dreaming tinker. "At this fair there is at all times to be seen juggling, cheats, games, plays, fools, apes, knaves and rogues, and that of every kind. Here are to be seen, too, and that for nothing, thieves."

My father's favourite text for the foregoing Sunday was: "Buy the truth, and sell it not." Though I had no money to spend, I cannot but wonder at the freedom of inspection which was granted me. I spent the day in wandering from stall to stall, wondering at, and "wondering after," all the sports and spectacles, being much more absorbed in the buyers and the sellers than in any of their wares; but eagerly and acquisitively noting, not character, but characters. The fair always culminated in a fight between two famed local champions. It was no emergent brawl, but a pitched battle, pre-arranged, prepared for, betted on—the event of the season, "the Derby" of the country-side. There was no attempt to stop it. Had there been a municipal Parliament in session it would, no doubt, have adjourned in honour of the "breed-improving," national amusement. It took place in one of the main streets, not five minutes' run from our own house. My curiosity was such that I managed to steal out and see it, at no light personal risk; for the crowd was dense, and roaring with excitement, and swaying to and fro with the incidents of the encounter. I managed to creep in amongst the rabble-rout so as to have a full, close view of all the fluctuations of the fray. It was a fearsome and yet weirdly fascinating spectacle; for the old Greek rule obtained: that a man must maintain the contest as long as he could stand. I twice saw the taller and far younger combatant "felled to the ground at once, as butcher felleth ox."

I also witnessed the preparations for another barbarous popular entertainment, which had even then (1828) almost

died out ; not, it was said, before the advance of civilisation or Christian sentiment, but from the growing scarcity of its victims. This was badger-baiting, which excited the more interest as four years had elapsed since a badger could be procured for the purpose. I had ample opportunity of observing the strange-looking, perilous, long-bodied beast as it was driven through the town to the place of combat, with its thick short legs, sharp claws, and formidable jaws ; like a weasel which had stopped half way in developing into a bear.

The coarseness of the street speech was beyond description shocking. The child's prayer :—

“O that I may never know
What the wicked people do !”

was “hindered” on the way to and from school, as was the corresponding Apostolic requirement. Few prayers were more common or more needed then : “Turn a pure language upon us.” It was impossible for Christian parents, even the most solicitous and careful, to protect their little ones from, not only incidental, but also intentional contamination. The Christian child could not but reiterate the cry : “Woe is me ! I dwell amidst a people of unclean lips !”

As to the natural history of Norfolk, the creature which most interested me was the bat. I have never seen it in anything like such swarms in any other part of the country. A numerous brotherhood of these strange, ambiguous creatures had made a homestead of New Buckenham church, as if it were their natural domicile ; and the dim-eyed devotees came flitting forth at twilight, like some dusky-draped privileged order of house-row missionaries gliding into every open door and window. On fine evenings it was necessary to close every casement at sunset, else our bedrooms would have been haunted all night with these flapping, crawling creatures. Not that they developed anything of the vampire instinct. My sister handled them freely, and fondled them fearlessly ; and though they showed their sharp white teeth they made no pretence to bite. The bat was an insinuating little self-invited guest, and could be readily domesticated and taught to understand a whistle, and to feed out of the hand. The Norfolk bat was like Cowper's jackdaw :—

“A great frequenter of the church,
Where, bishop-like, it found a perch
And dormitory too.”

The ritualistic proclivities of this idol priest of prophecy (Isaiah ii. 20) were sometimes disturbing to more intelligent attendants on the service. A devout lady would be surprised to find one of these unwelcome church-goers clinging to her dress, and would have to use her Prayer-Book in ejecting it into the aisle.

Of wild vegetable products, which I found either in greater profusion or of finer quality in Norfolk than in any other county, I may name the sloe, the wood sorrel, and the wild truffle. Of the first-named I have seen none elsewhere to be compared for size or taste with those which grow within scent of the sea breeze of Norfolk. To my boyish palate the austere flavour of the English hedge-plum was as grateful as in after years the severe, rough, acid style of Dr South was to my maturer mental taste. In like manner the delicate and wholesome piquancy of the wood sorrel was recalled by Goldsmith's subtle, healthy, native humour. The wild truffle, called *pig-nut*, from the fondness of that animal for this woodland luxury, was to me a far choicer dainty than the best cultivated and best cooked truffle I have since tasted at any rich man's table. My own self-help was equal to the service which Caliban offered Trinculo in the *Tempest*: “I, with my long nails, will dig thee pig-nuts”; nor did I need a guide “to clustering filberts.”

In addition to the luscious crumbs which were allowed to fall from “boon Nature's” *table d'hôte* within the reach of school-boy naturalist, the “area of subsistence” open to a Methodist preacher's family was enlarged by our vicinity to the sea, which was but some six miles distant. For the railway and the fish-train being still in the far-off future, dwellers on the coast could taste untravelled crabs, and were not confined to the returned leavings of the London market. A boy could get his cap full of tasty periwinkles for a half-penny (called “pin-panches,” from the means by which they were extracted from the shell); and since the sprat had not yet learnt to personate the sardine, as often as a vast shoal of this nutritious fish found its way to Cromer, they were brought to the door in cart-loads and sold by the bushel, large quantities being purchased for manure.

Not long before we left North Walsham an incident occurred which affected me no little. Whilst a labourer was employed in sinking a deep well about a mile from the town, one of the sides fell in and buried the poor man alive. Hearing of the accident, I hastened to the spot. I can never forget the sight. As many of the most stalwart diggers as could stand upon the spot without being in each other's way were wielding the spade with a silent energy and directness, an intensity and absorption in their work, such as I had never seen. They took no heed of the spectators ; they lost no time in talk ; they never paused to breathe. One thought possessed them wholly : " Under this earth our mate is buried, and may possibly be still alive. Not a moment must be lost." I felt : If the bare possibility of rescuing and prolonging one short mortal life can inspire men with such earnestness and nerve them with such force, and make them so regardless of every other consideration, what zeal and self-forgetfulness can be too great in the hope of saving from eternal death a soul for whom Christ died ? Alas ! the poor fellow was found dead.

It was during this Norfolk period that the critical conception first sprung up within my mind. I had been rehearsing to my father Byron's *Destruction of Sennacherib*. On my asking whether he did not think it splendid he replied : " Yes, Ben, it's a gem, with but one faint flaw. Don't you see that one word in it is nonsense ?

' And the eyes of the sleepers waxed deadlly and chill,
And their hearts but once heaved and for ever *grew* still.'

How can hearts *grow* still for *ever* ? There must soon come a time when it has grown as still as it can ever be, and then it *must* stop *growing* still." " Well, what ought it to be, father ? " " Why, ' for ever *were* still ' would be the plain truth ; but that wouldn't *flow*. It wouldn't be music, and poetry must be music. ' For ever *stopped* still ' wouldn't be poetry. It would be flat prose. It would make you think of a watch or a clock. ' For ever *stood* still ' seems the best ; though there might be some objection even to that ; and in repeating it you must not lay any stress on ' stood ' but all upon ' still.' "

To most people this will seem hyper-criticism ; but it none the less opened to me an entirely new world of thought. Before that moment it had never occurred to me that the

poetry of a real poet could possibly be improved. In this sphere I had assumed an absolute optimism; that in poetry, "whatever *is* is *right*; whatever *is* is *best*." My notion had been that poetry was simply lines written by a poet. I had thought, in my simplicity, that it was the good poet that made good poetry, not good poetry that made the good poet. Thus the "little arrogant, intrusive" elf of criticism was at that instant conjured up within me and has never since been laid.

The contrast, in both comfort and celerity, between our retrace-journey to Yorkshire and our week's waggonade from Yorkshire to Norfolk, indicates a wonderful advance in the facilities and ideas of locomotion during the three years which intervened. We were sent to Yarmouth in a chaise. There we were met by a future brother-in-law of Luke H. Wiseman, and conducted to the house of a leading Yarmouth Methodist, Mr Robinson, an ironmonger, at the sign of *The Golden Key*: a huge, gorgeously-gilt key being suspended above his shop-door.

The next morning I was down betimes, for I had spied a bewitching edition of Legh Richmond's *Dairyman's Daughter*, a book of which I had heard much, but as yet seen nothing. I was soon deep in its fascinating descriptions of the scenery of the Isle of Wight. In the afternoon we embarked for Hull on board the steamship *Lowther*, which, with its consort the *Graham*, plied twice a week between Yarmouth and Hull. In 1828 the coasting-steamer was a novelty. As I had not the slightest tendency to sea-sickness, and quite as little tendency to sleep, the twenty-four hours' voyage was to me delightful. It was a magnificent moonlight night, and as we plunged through "Boston Deep," the towering steeple, playfully called by the sailors "Boston Stump," was distinctly visible, though with a seemingly unreal and unearthly grandeur. A shoal of porpoises lifted their black bulk out of the water, and rolled and tumbled and gambolled in the wake of the ship, greatly adding to the interest of the scene, although the sailors told us they were forerunners of foul weather. The little leviathans seemed to know that God had not only "made this great and wide sea," that there might "go the ships," but had made them "to play therein."

The sea must have been in a rather lively mood, judging from the strikingly contrasted smoothness of the Humber, which seemed, in comparison, as still as the legendary river

Sabbation on the seventh day. The cocoa-coloured waters of the noble estuary might have known that was the Lord's day, so peaceful was their flow. We gazed with reverential interest on Grimsby at its mouth, as the place at which father had passed the first two years of his ministry, returning seventeen years later to complete another term. We spent the night in Hull; the first town I ever saw lighted with lamps. None of the little towns in which we had lived was lighted with lamps; people had to pick their way about the streets after nightfall by the aid of lanterns dimly burning, generally of King Alfred's patent, with scraped horn instead of glass.

The preacher's house at Patrington not only adjoined the chapel but was dovetailed into it. The two interpenetrated each other, forming one building on the same foundation and under the same continuous roof. A door from the preacher's house opened directly into the preacher's pew; and my own bedroom was built above the large vestry in which was held the Week-night Prayer-meeting, which I was allowed to attend to my great contentation, though occasionally, it must be confessed, more to my amusement than my edification. As in the North Riding, so here in the East, the Prayer-meeting was almost always lay-led, the preachers never being free from some preaching appointment except on Saturdays; and the mode of conducting it was in much greater danger of erring on the free and easy side than on that of stiff formality. My father's colleagues at Patrington were William Kaye and Thomas Short. Although three months of the exhaustion and exposure of the immense East Coast Circuit, comprising the present Hornsea and Withernsea Circuits, broke down Mr Kaye in the full strength of his mid-manhood, and although—as he lived at Hedon, several miles away from us—we saw very little of him, yet his winning and respect-inspiring personality left an indelible impression on my mind and heart. Happily for me he spent one Sunday night at our house, and like a Methodist preacher of the olden stamp, he *laid himself out* to interest me in spiritual and eternal facts, and to influence me for my present and my everlasting good. That brief and interrupted intercourse completely won my heart. To me he is for ever associated with the charming passage which he read at family worship from his own pencil-marked pocket-Bible, the unfailing companion of his weary walks through the length

and breadth of Holderness. The passage seemed to be chosen directly for the sake of the boy whose acquaintance he had so lately made; it was the parting scene between Jonathan and David at "the Stone Ezel," when the "little lad," who ran to pick up the arrows of the king's son, played his unconscious part in one of the most touching episodes of history. Little did I think next morning, when the grave, yet winsome preacher pressed my hand so lovingly as he said Good-bye, that our next trysting-place would be the Father's house. On Saturday, December 2nd, 1828, Mr Kaye reached home after his week's round of plodding and preaching, and the same evening gained his heavenly home. His dying, though so speedy, was sublime. His last words were:—

"No condemnation now I dread,
 Jesus, and all in Him, is mine!
Alive in Him, my living Head,
 And clothed in righteousness Divine,
Bold I approach the eternal throne,
And claim the crown, through Christ my own."

"Yes, Jesus is the foundation of my hope." As this was the first death which had occurred within my own special circle, it powerfully affected me, giving me a bright, grand view of Christian dying, as "death swallowed up in victory."

"The young preacher" Thomas Short was, in some respects, a striking contrast to his energetic, able kinsman, T. Tapley Short. For affairs and administration he had neither aptitude nor appetite. He was, I think, the slowest speaking man I ever listened to. The time he would expend in enunciating his formulated answer to the question: "How do ye do?" "*Midd-ling con-si-der-ing*," was marvellous. It seemed weighted with the weariness of the dree mileage of all the "sticky" roads of Holderness. He was an insatiable bookworm; and even in his probation had a lovely library, kept with an almost ritualistic and reverential scrupulosity of care.

Although at Patrington, as at New Buckenham and North Walsham, the leading day-school was conducted by a local preacher, I was, at first, sent once more to a dame-school; mainly perhaps from motives of economy, but partly because of the reputation for severity which the master had acquired. "Mother Wallace," so hight my educatrix, was a widow and a seller of sweeties. The coloured light that played so pleasantly

upon our primers, spelling-books, "Testaments" and Catechisms, came streaming through glass jars surcharged with "sugar candy," "acid drops," "candied peel" and "comfits"—always called "comforts"—the tantalising sight of which acted as a constant diversion to our little eyes, and an unfailing lubricant to our longing lips. Mother Wallace had the imposing figure of a heroine; had she claimed descent from the Scottish chieftain whose romantic name she bore, I, at least, should not have criticised her pedigree. Her initial difficulty with her new-comer from Norfolk was the revising and emending my pronunciation of proper names. In our spelling-book, Xenophon was compelled to divide with Xerxes the entire empire of the letter X, and Mother Wallace insisted on my rendering both phonetically, not according to Hellenistic barbarism, but in the classic speech of Holderness. The Greek commander and historian had to answer to the name of "X-an-no-fun," and take what comfort he could from hearing the barbaric invader of his country degraded into "X-erexes."

This was all fun to me and to our folks at home; but the latter soon began to think that "the game would not pay for the candle," so I was once more promoted to an *Academy for Young Ladies and Young Gentlemen*. One acquisition, however, of permanent value, I owe to the East Riding dame-school—a familiarity with the Church Catechism to the end of "my duty towards my neighbour." In addition to its intrinsic instructiveness, I derived from it an incidental advantage of very great importance. After trying in vain to correlate its second question and answer with the terms and tenor of the religious teaching I had received at home and from the pulpit, "Who gave you that name? My godfathers and godmothers in my baptism; wherein I was made a member of Christ, the child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven"—I submitted the difficulty to my father, who seemed very glad to give me my first direct lesson on experimental divinity. My father's reputation as a theological thinker, in his Circuits and amongst his brethren, was almost equal to his estimation as a preacher. The local preachers and his colleagues were accustomed to make him their confidant in all their doctrinal perplexities. I had been used to hear him pronounced to be "the greatest *divine*" that Norfolk Methodism had ever known; and I had eagerly listened to many a deft

solution of problems in divinity. So I consulted him confidently in my first doctrinal dilemma. He seemed to see at once the advantage of beginning a course of training in the doctrines of Christianity, with the true conception of infant baptism, and the relation of a child to God. He explained to me that Baptism could not possibly have done for me what, either on the one hand, Creation and my birth-relationship to Christ had done already ; or, on the other, what the New Testament constantly connects with Repentance and Faith.

Seeing what a fascination these subjects had for my eager little mind, my father undertook to start and guide me on a course of experimental divinity. I cannot but think that his first choice of a class-book was judicious and felicitous. Before setting out on one of his "rounds," he put into my hand Bunyan's *Holy War*, telling me to read it as I would any ordinary tale or history ; and, when he came back, to tell him the story in my own words and way, as I might tell a playmate any exciting incidents or adventures I had read in the old magazines or elsewhere. Of course, I devoured the wondrous narrative with avidity, not troubling myself, in the first instance, with its allegorical significance. On his return my father asked me how I liked the tale, and how much I could remember of it. He then took the part of Philip the evangelist to the Ethiopian treasurer, asking : "Understandest thou what thou readest ?"

And so that narrow "house-place" at Patrington became my earliest lecture-hall in theology ; and those first lessons, traced for me with clearness, vividness and precision, my leading lines of thought, as leader, as preacher, and as writer on experimental godliness. With what animation and impressiveness my father showed me how all the forces of good and evil in the universe gather round the little "Town of Mansoul," till "*King Shaddai*" and "*Prince Emmanuel*" became to me more interesting and influential than any hero of romance or knight of chivalry or conqueror in history. Especially did my paternal tutor insist upon the high office and the sacred functions of "*Mr Recorder Conscience*"; and of the *de facto* kingmaker, "*My Lord Will-be-Will*." My father took occasion from this to explain to me the difference between Calvinism and Arminianism, of which I had heard so much, and to emphasise the instructive fact that Bunyan though a strong

Calvinist, yet when writing simply and directly from Scripture and experience, was obliged to show that the decision of a soul for or against its Maker and Redeemer is dependent on the WILL. My father also impressed upon me deeply a truth which is most perilously overlooked in the present day : that the army of Diabolus has no more effective force than those foreign free-lances—"the Doubters"; with whom it is the fashion nowadays to fraternise. He showed me also that Emmanuel's famous generals were "Captains Boanerges, Conviction and Experience," and "Ensign Terror, quartered in Mr Conscience's house," and "Mr Godly-Fear."

So attractive to me were these informal lectures as to awake in me a passion for theological investigation. The edition of *The Holy War* which had been placed in my hand was that included by Wesley in the *Christian Library*; and the same volume also contained a treatise entitled : *A Gospel Glass*. On this I fastened with such zest that I remember well stretching myself on the hearth-rug, and poring over it in the dusk by the light of the fire when our frugal economics could not afford a candle until it was absolutely needed for household work. From this passion for theology arose the curious fact that I became familiar with the author of *Robinson Crusoe* as a religious writer years before I knew anything of him as a story-teller. Rummaging amongst my father's many books I came upon a quaint octavo with the title : *The History of the Devil*, by Daniel De Foe. Its homely vernacular and yet varied vocabulary, its realistic detail, and above all its grim, audacious humour, held me spellbound. From this I went on to a dark-bound volume, with a ghastly frontispiece, called *Drclin-court on Death*, to which De Foe had written an awesome Introduction. MacGowan's keen-edged satire — *The Shaver* — on the expulsion of the six young gowmsmen from Oxford "for holding Methodistical tenets," lured me on to read his scarcely less amusing *Dialogues of Devils*.

My mother laboured even more directly and more closely than my father to bring the great facts of the spiritual world to bear upon my heart. This she did in the most careful privacy, when the rest of the family were absent, and with the utmost delicacy. She asked me one Sunday whether I should like to read along with her Doddridge's *Rise and Progress of Religion in the Soul*, of which she had procured a

beautiful little edition. This overture I heartily embraced. Her plan was, either to read herself or to hear me read a paragraph at a time, and then talk about it freely, giving me the history of the religious experience of her own early childhood, and then eliciting my childish thoughts, feelings, hopes and aims. She began at the stage of the religious life to which she thought I had attained. When I came to a prayer she left me alone with God, to offer it in my own boyish way, with whatever variations or additions my conscience might suggest. The effect was immediate and most powerful.

This parental teaching was most happily followed up by that of the Sunday school, which formed a most delightful contrast to my experiences in Norfolk. I was greatly favoured in my teachers. My morning teacher, Richard Chapman, became a well-known Wesleyan minister, and thirty-eight years afterwards was the superintendent of my eldest son. He was wisely chosen as our first missionary to the seamen on the Thames, being well acquainted with the heart of a sailor: his father was a fisherman, and he himself was the embodiment of cheerfulness, frankness, good-nature, and appreciation of the ludicrous. Though powerfully built and blessed with redundant health and spirits, he too was struck down in middle-life, at the age of fifty-five. His sympathetic fondness for the young and power to influence them for their good, proved to be one of his most useful qualifications for the Ministry. Though in social life he spoke good English, he yet found it convenient to communicate with his scholars in the broadest East Riding dialect. In dealing out our books, he always asked: "Weeas awes this?" ("Whose is this?"), and before hearing us repeat our ticket-texts, he invariably issued the order: "Put yer 'ands beyunt ye." His object was the keeping our fingers out of "*furder mischief*," and protecting the buttons of our Sunday best from the soil and strain of nervous fumbling.¹

The system of rewarding punctuality, good conduct and attention, by the gift of little red-lettered tickets with a short passage of Scripture printed on each, such as: "Be sure your sin will find you out"—which the recipient was required to

¹ [I cannot forbear adding my own humble tribute to one of the gentlest and kindest of men. His real mental ability was joined to touching simplicity and goodness without guile.—J. R. G.]

repeat the next Sunday, had at least one advantage: it deposited in the memory a living germ of spiritual and moral truth, which the earnest and judicious teacher did his best to imbed in the mind, and to illustrate by anecdote and kindly talk.

I was on the best possible terms with my young Sunday morning teacher. At that time I occasionally made a hymn-verse in my sleep, which I could remember on awaking. Richard Chapman was the patron of these joint productions of Morpheus and Orpheus. He was a brickmaker, and my laddish prattle beguiled the monotony of his task, whilst the ease and deftness with which that task was performed was my admiration and my envy. He offered to induct me into the mystery of his art; and had my patience with my own unhandiness borne any proportion to his forbearance with me, I should have acquired that little piece of technical education, which, it was suggested, might be of service to me, should I ever be a missionary, or be cast, like Alexander Selkirk, upon "a desolate island." In like manner Willie Overton, a good-humoured journeyman carpenter, undertook to initiate me into the rudiments of joinery, and went so far as to entrust me with his plane. But, alas! I never got beyond knocking in a nail, or driving and drawing a screw or rivet.

My Sunday afternoon teacher was a perfect gentleman, an Officer of Excise, who bore the truly descriptive name of *Good*. I was placed in one of the lowest classes on the Sunday morning, and in the very highest in the afternoon, I suppose in both cases by the teacher's choice. Mr Good paid me direct and assiduous attention on the week-day as well as on the Sabbath. He allured me by money prizes to commit to memory what he regarded as the finest passages of the New Testament, from a literary point of view; such as St Paul's speech before Agrippa, and the part of 1 Corinthians xv. which is read at the Burial Service. He also took pains to interest me in what he thought our finest hymns; notably the majestic paraphrase: "Let not the wise his wisdom boast." His teaching also was in a high degree attractive, being based upon the most interesting historic portions of Scripture.

It was in connection with the Sunday school Anniversary that I made my first deliverance in public. I was perched, as the people expressively described it, "sparrow-mounted," on a

platform, and made to recite a very sweet and suitable little hymn. It was then and thus that I made my first acquaintance with a very notable personality, with whom in after years I was closely and most pleasantly associated. The preacher and conductor of the service, Charles Welch, of Hull, had already won a Connexional celebrity by his voice and by his pen. His tall and imposing figure, his strong Hebraic contour, his look of calm command, his grave, yet easy bearing, and his trained and animated elocution, were enough to add dignity to almost any occasion. I was so excited, and so eager to have done with my performance as to mistake the stage of the proceedings at which my turn should come, which was, of course, between the sermon and the collection. Misapprehending the superintendent's order "Rise" (to sing a hymn), as the signal for my recitation, I started to my feet and lifted up my voice with what little strength I had. The superintendent tried to put me right, but the kind-hearted preacher would not allow me to be interfered with. The look of interest and of seeming deference with which he listened as he leaned over Patrington pulpit was not exceeded by that with which he was wont, eighteen years afterwards, to look up to me from his pew in Waltham Street chapel, Hull, when I had become his pastor.

But my mental as well as my spiritual training was chiefly carried on at home. At this time two of my father's books, Myles' *History of Methodism*, and Atmore's *Methodist Memorial*, greatly strengthened the interest in Methodism and its worthies, which Clarke's *Wesley Family* had awoken. A large proportion of the men portrayed by Atmore, as well as Atmore himself, had been personally known to my father, or my mother, or both; and they loved to confirm and supplement from their personal knowledge the facts narrated in the book. And the names of the contemporary notabilities of Methodism were made household words amongst us by a lyric composed by my father, beginning with the strong line: "Great Jabez, the Wesleyan head," in which were depicted all the magnates of the Conference.

A book which at this period cast a strong spell upon my mind was the *Apocrypha*, a copy of which was one of the many volumes placed upon shelves suspended in my bedroom. What first attracted me was the discussion by the three young men of the relative strength of Wine, the King, Woman, and

Truth ; with its quaint Oriental setting. None of the poetic moralising of *Rasselas* or *Telemachus* had any charm for me to equal this, and the rhythmic Wisdom of the Son of Sirach ; whilst the Books of Maccabees had an interest more romantic than the stories of Spartacus, of Hofer, and *The Scottish Chiefs*. Even the grave, antique legends of the book were more delightful to my taste than the dazzling, tiresome unreality of the *Arabian Nights Entertainments* ; always excepting the robust and comical adventures of Sinbad the Sailor.

Another book, read at this time, the effect of which has never faded from my mind, was *Elizabeth ; or, The Exiles of Siberia*. I then learnt, what I have never since unlearned, to regard that huge barbarian power, Russia, as not only a monstrous obstruction, but also a perpetual menace to civil and religious freedom and enlightenment.

It was well for me that my voracious bookishness was balanced by a vivid interest in Nature. This interest was greatly quickened by my reading, in that exquisite little book for boys and girls, *Evenings at Home*, by Dr Aikin and Mrs Barbauld, the chapter entitled *Eyes and No Eyes ; or, The Art of Seeing*, which called attention to the objects of interest to be noted in an ordinary country walk. The most striking objects there described are remarkably common in Holderness.

This district was a great stretch of ditch-divided flats, where agricultural and shrimping villages are separated by pewit-haunted, mole-mined, blackberry-bounded tracts, wherein schoolless lads watched great herds of swine, or scared birds from the corn-lands, solacing themselves the while with the crab-apples which grew profusely in fields intersected by a bewildering system of deep, wide drains, where gruff-speaking men in flat-bottomed boats drew up from the mud, with a trident, innumerable eels.

In this English Dutchland I was allowed, on holidays, to take my naturalist "rambles and reveries" at will, morning, afternoon, and evening, and became familiar with the habits and the habitat of curious creatures. It was most interesting, for example, to watch the cleverness of thought and action with which the shapely, knowing-looking lapwing would sham a broken wing and flap temptingly before an intruder, to lure him from the hollow in the ground in which her eggs were hid. As to that ingenious, enterprising tunnel-driver, the mole, I had the

advantage of unfeed professional instruction. Directly opposite our dwelling lived the indispensable "moudard-ketcher" (*moldwarp*, or mole-catcher) of the district. Through him I had ample opportunities of studying the peculiarities of that most interesting mammal. My researches in natural history were greatly encouraged by our medical man, Dr Dunn, who was also our near neighbour. Being a bachelor of retiring, simple habits, he devoted great part of his leisure and his income to the collecting of specimens of the fauna and mineralogy of Holderness. Amongst other of the rarer British birds, he had a beautiful specimen of the foreign-looking hoopoe, which he had shot in his own garden. He had also the finest agate I ever saw, well worthy of a place in the High Priest's breast-plate.

Among the most powerful agents in the training of my tastes during our year in Holderness, was a highly intelligent young Primitive Methodist, Thompson Hesk, of Hull, who spent a good deal of time in Patrington, with relatives of his who were neighbours of ours. His temperament was ardent and poetic: he was a dramatic, trained reciter, a charming singer of tunes and hymns unheard by me before, an eager reader, and an enthusiastic talker. These accomplishments made him such a favourite with us young people, that he could never wear out welcome at our house. He taught me much, and fired me with a yet intenser passion for poetry and rhetoric. Inflamed with a missionary ardour, for which his own denomination did not give him scope enough, he offered himself to our own Conference as pioneer missionary to Ashanti. He was accepted. Though he was several years my senior, we entered the Ministry in the same year, 1840. Through him I first became acquainted with Primitive Methodism.

The first camp-meeting I attended was in "Cheeseman cloise," Patrington. With this I was so interested and impressed that I have never wittingly let slip the opportunity of attending one since. At this time I saw a good deal of the Primitive Methodists, and conceived for them a deep respect, which I have cherished ever since. On the farms held by the Egglestones, the principal Methodist family in the Circuit, at Patrington and Sunk Island, a large number of the men-servants lived in the house, and took their meals in the kitchen. If I remember rightly, all of these but one were "Primitives,"

and that one, being a rustic humourist, was incessantly amusing himself at their expense by composing clever parodies of their favourite ditties, which he sung to their favourite tunes, with a resonant vociferation like their own, "till roof and rafters a' did dirl." We children were always welcome guests at the plenty-teeming farmstead; and I have never forgotten the meek good-humour with which the earnest men endured his chaffing, evidently confident that he, too, would "glorify God in the day of visitation."

My whole life at Patrington was blithesome and intense. Through God's blessing on our frugal yet sufficing fare, and my long, delightful rural explorations, I enjoyed hilarious health. My pedestrian powers were practically inexhaustible. I walked to Holmpton, our nearest coast-point, full four miles across the fields, with dog-like digressions, spent the whole day on the cliffs and the beach, and sauntered back in the evening, with only just enough of weariness to make bed welcome. Of course, I was well provided with the local luxuries—eel-pie or collop-cake. In season, eels were brought daily to the door, and enough for a voluptuous family dinner sold for a few pence. The rival dainty was composed of *collops*¹—thick layers—of bacon, imbedded in pastry. When thirsty, I had nothing to do but call at the nearest farm-house, and crave "a drink of water," and was sure of Jael's hospitality without her treachery. One day I found upon the beach at Holmpton a sea-gull, one of whose wings was shattered by a sportsman's shot.

"A wounded bird that had but one
Imperfect wing to soar upon."

As the poor bird made no resistance and seemed rather grateful than afraid, I took it home with me, "to bless me with its soft" pink "eye." "The wild seamew" was a most interesting, lovable, companionable, and seemingly affectionate, confiding, and intelligent creature, showing much greater aptitude at gulling than at being gulled, displaying no slight ingenuity in catching worms, which it would draw to the surface by tapping or dancing on the soil above them. As we had a rivulet at the bottom of our garden abounding in sticklebacks and minnows, it could indulge its swimming habits; and it was lavishly supplied, especially with live

¹ See Job xv. 27: "Collops of fat on his flanks."

shrimps, of which we could procure an indefinite quantity, several of our members at Haven-side, the port of Patrington, about a mile distant, being shrimpers. But, alas! it pined away, and as it was evidently suffering pitiably, I was told that, having taken it from its natural home, it was now my duty to "put it out of its misery." This was the most cruel obligation that had ever yet been laid upon my conscience. It distressed me sorely to see the sufferings of my pet, but it was long before I could nerve myself to give the *coup-de-grace*. At last I discharged my task with such merciless misgiving that the poor bird had time to turn upon me what seemed an upbraiding look, I should think like that which the half-dead Monmouth fixed upon his unnerved executioner. The piteous *Tu quoque Brute?* of those gentle eyes will still "look on me till I die." When I read in *The Ancient Mariner* :—

"Why look'st thou so?
With my cross-bow,
I shot the albatross,"—

I could not but feel :—

"Why look'st thou so?
With deadly blow
I struck my tame seamew,"

Though I never could "rob a poor bird of" even its eggs, yet, under the plea that I was acting "in the interests of science," I formed a beautiful collection of wild birds' eggs, and became learned in their distinctive shapeliness, colouring, and markings. At this time a good deal of money was given to me by visitors, and I spent nearly all of it in the purchase of wild birds' eggs, which I could obtain from juvenile depredators for a few half-pence, or brass buttons, which formed at that time, along with strings of perforated cherry-bobs, a kind of cowrie currency amongst young rustic speculators.

This early interest in, and habit of observing, the peculiarities, mannerisms, originalities, and individualities of the brute creation has been to me a source of pure and rich enjoyment, and I trust of no slight moral and even spiritual as well as mental improvement. It has resulted in not only a warm affection for "the lower animals," but also an admiration of and respect for their resourceful intelligence in altogether new emergencies, their surprising range of faculty, their docility and educability, their

sensitiveness of perception, their shamefastness, as quite distinct from fear of penal consequences, their love of approbation, as quite another thing than hope of perquisites, and their many estimable dispositions, far more worthy of human emulation than of human contempt.

That there was, at this time, not much the matter with my heart or lungs was proved by some impromptu escapades of mine. It is a curious psychological fact that I have no initiative whatever in friendship or in even harmless trespass, and yet have, by nature, almost as little power to resist overtures or solicitations to the one or the other. Now Patrington Church is a very stately, lofty edifice, being built as an enduring monument of grateful devotion, and as a landmark to wanderers on the sea, the Humber, or the bewildering flats of Holderness. One day as I was feasting my eyes on its comely proportions and wondering wide-mouthed at the external imagery which Puritanism had spared, and grinning back at the grotesques which edged the leaded roof, a ferret-faced, yellow-haired young Scandinavian, who was always roving about the town in search of adventures, ran up to me and said: "Eeh! lad, t' chotch dooers oppen! Let's gang up ti t' leads." And without giving me a moment's time to discuss with myself the propriety or expediency of the expedition, he began to stride up the long, narrow, winding turret stair, lighted only by arrow slits, at a rate which tested the texture of his well-worn corduroys. I followed at his heels, my heart throbbing hard with moral misgiving and vaguest apprehension of the possible penalties of the audacious intrusion. But when we reached the steeply slanting "leads," the magnificent, to my eyes the magical, panorama made me utterly oblivious of and indifferent to all possible pains, penalties, or penances. All Holderness lay at our feet. The glorious sweep of the German Ocean, the broad Humber, and the belittled town with its Liliputian men and women, its toy trees and dolls' houses, struck me into a stillness as of a statue. The view of the Rhineland from the height of Cologne Cathedral in after years did not affect me half so much. How long I should have stayed, entranced and motionless, I know not, had not my tempter become my timely monitor. "Eeh! lad," he cried, "we mooant stop heere." And away we tore at a break-neck speed down the time-worn steps of stone.

How glad was I to find myself once more outside "t' chotch dooers." My little tempter then began characteristically to dilate upon the dangers which at first he had ignored. "Eeh! lad, us mud a' been locked in till Seturdah t' neet, when t' ringers cum. If t' saxton 'd cotched us he'd 'a' locked us up sumwheres. Onny hoo, he'd 'a' scolded and scared us *reet*. Niver heed! we can saah we's been *reet up ti t' leads*." Ah, well! my rustic tempter was like many a climbing sightseer and tourist I have met with since, the main point being to be able to say: "We've been to the top" of this or that edifice or mountain.

The worst transgression my young tempter ever led me into was one which has greatly served the cause of geographical science, civilisation, and commerce, namely, exploration, with a questionable right of way. And, perhaps, this is, in one respect, "*felix culpa*." I do not know to what else to attribute the only athletic exercise in which I at any time excelled: the art of running and of clearing gates or fences at a bound. The winged heels of Mercury could hardly have outstripped my fear-feathered feet when compelled to *take out running powers* over the fields of a chasing farmer. Our working, or rather our playing, hypothesis was evidently, that all harmless trespass is blameless.

Another bit of boyish license which I learnt from this scaramouch of a Coryphæus in mischief was connected with one of the most popular and influential inventions of our time. Hadyn gives as the date of the first omnibus that ever ran in London—from Paddington to the City—July 1829. Now I can testify that, some months before this date, a two-horse vehicle of the same shape, construction, and arrangement, and called *by the same name*, plied stately between Hull and Patrington. It was driven by a smart, active young fellow named Wing, the son of an innkeeper in Hull.

"Omnibus" thus became the first little bit of applied Latin that ever came into my possession. Nevertheless, there was no pedantry in the literal acceptance which my little vulgar prompter in unharmed liberties taught me to give it. As the traffic would not pay for two men as well as two horses, there was no conductor, so the step into the omnibus was left unguarded. It was rare fun to waylay "t' omnibus" at the end of the town as it left its last stopping. There was just risk enough in this exploit to make it interesting.

It would be a great mistake to suppose that my boyhood passed without a healthy share of free-hearted, venturous, laughing lad-life, or with none of the jolly elements implied in the indulgent maxim : "*Lads will be lads*"; or that my home life was austere and sternly disciplined ; that my mind was so soaked with theology, and so absorbed in mystic introspection, as to feel faint interest in any other subject. To begin with, the religion with which my mind was imbued in childhood, at Sunday School as at home, was essentially a religion of love and pleasantness and joy. Its key-note was Charles Wesley's hymn which we *practised* for so many Sunday mornings to sing at the Sunday School Anniversary, turned into an expressive and exhilarating anthem with

"Many a winding bout
Of linked sweetness long drawn out."

It rings in my head and heart, like church chimes mellowed by water and by distance, to this very hour. I had then, and, thank God, I have still, the profoundest conviction of its literal fidelity to fact :—

"Happy, beyond description he
Who in the paths of piety
Loves from his birth to run :
Her ways are ways of pleasantness,
And all her paths are joy and peace,
And heaven on earth begun.

"If this felicity were mine,
I every other would resign,
With just and holy scorn ;
Cheerful and blithe my way pursue,
And with the promised land in view,
Singing, to God return."

The last three lines I never could hear sung too often.

On reflection, I cannot but think that my mother held me with too loose a hand. My roving commission in the streets, and fields, and lanes was too indefinite. With the exception of the five weeks of vacation enjoyed by the splendid Grove lads, John and Thomas Pearson, I had no companion whatever of my own sex, age, and rank in life, and so was open to the advances of any little vulgar boy with whom I might happen to foregather. The youngest son of our principal Methodist

family was never at his Patrington home except for a few days at Christmas, being either at boarding school or at the Sunk Island farm during the rest of the year. At a boys' Christmas party, where all but myself were the sons of respectable farmers, and we were considerably left to amuse each other, I was no match for them in romping; and though their rural ditties had a great charm for me, and still linger in my memory, yet my recitations were quite out of their line. And although free intercourse in childhood with fisherfolk, and artisans, and farmers' boys had great educative advantages for a future Methodist itinerant—and I found them in the main a most kind-hearted, honest, harmless people—yet some of the men and lads indulged in a coarseness of expression of which it would have been well for me to be entirely ignorant. Yet even then I proved the truth of Mr Wells' observation, in *Rescuers and Rescued*: "Some of the noblest young hearts beat under rags." I never met a more generous, gentle-natured being than an unschooled lad who, at about my age, had to earn a few pence by scaring birds and tending swine, from sunrise to sunset, in some remote fields within my range of rambling.

Spontaneous reading seemed hardly ever to be thought of by any of my school-fellows. The only book I ever had the chance of borrowing from any one of them was *Roderick Random*; and I was so disgusted with its impurities that I have never been able to attempt another of Smollett's tales from that day to this. I got a very serviceable amount of general information from one of my father's books, Guy's *Cyclopædia*; and a good deal of Biblical instruction from another, Scraggs' *Questions*: a work explaining some of the most difficult passages of Scripture.

We had most enjoyable religious parties at our house, of which the chief charm, besides singing, consisted in a pious and edifying pastime, which might with some advantage be revived. This consisted in repeating, in the order in which we happened to be sitting, first, verses of Scripture, and then verses of our hymns, in alphabetical order. In this we children were not only allowed to take our share, but were good-humouredly indulged in unfair advantage, which was sometimes disconcerting to the rest. We had a way of shifting our position in the room when we found ourselves at a loss for a verse beginning with the right letter.

We saw all the more of the Local Preachers at our house from the fact that the nucleus of a Local Preachers' Library was kept in our sitting-room. The principal book was a folio edition of Matthew Henry's *Commentary*.

It would be a strange mistake to fancy that the great *political event* of 1829, the passing of the Roman Catholic Relief Bill, made but small stir in the little towns and the farmsteads and fishing hamlets of such an out-of-the-way district as Holderness. It may serve as an indication of the changes that have taken place during the last sixty years, that in 1829 the remote Patrington Circuit contained two Parliamentary boroughs, Aldborough and Hedon. Hedon was not then the grass-grown graveyard of a past prosperity which it has since become; but a self-conscious, self-appreciating, wide-awake market town, with smart shops and well-frequented streets, echoing merrily to the magnificent peal of bells from its grand old church tower. Aldborough—the *Old Borough*—could boast of being the birth-place of the devout, popular, philosophic historian Bigland, and as being represented in Parliament by the most distinguished historic Methodist member of the time, the great Christian philanthropist Michael Thomas Sadler, whom the late Earl of Shaftesbury acknowledged to be the parent of the beneficent social legislation which the latter statesman so happily accomplished. More than forty years ago the town itself was almost wholly swallowed up by the encroaching sea; the disintegration of the cliffs being wonderfully rapid. I myself walking under them suddenly heard behind me a tremendous thud upon the beach, and looking back saw the place I had passed a few seconds earlier covered with the wreckage of a huge mass of shore line.

The social fact of this period which most vividly impressed itself on the juvenile imagination was the appalling atrocity, the chief perpetrator of which—the Irishman Burke—has left his name as a new verb in the English language—*burking*. It is scarcely possible for any one to realise, except by memory, the widespread panic which this wholesale system of murder by suffocation, in order to sell the corpse to anatomists for dissection, occasioned during the winter of 1828-9, especially in unlighted towns. Methodist preachers to and from their country appointments on lonely roads were thought to be

peculiarly exposed to this hideous peril ; and not a few were the uncouth adventures which some of them could relate.

The burning of York Minster by the act of a demented Local Preacher, Jonathan Martin, brother of the already famous painter John Martin, created an intense excitement in our little Yorkshire manse. As Jonathan had been a close friend of my father's during his successive terms of service in the York District, the conflagration cast a lurid light upon our quiet homestead. My father's distress was distressing to behold, as he had formed a high estimate of Jonathan Martin's intellect and character.

Of the peculiar local customs of Holderness the most amusing was the *morris-dance* (a corruption of *Moorish-dance*), a survival from the Middle Ages. At holiday times the farmers' lads and lasses turned out in the most fantastic guise ; with faces begrimed and bedaubed with paint, and tricked out in ribbons and tawdry old theatricals. The dance itself required no little skill and practice, as it consisted of many involutions, evolutions, and rapid changes of side, and rhythmical strokes with small clubs carried by the performers. The principal figures were : a gigantic female, called Maid Marian, in contrast with a rosy-cheeked Queen of the May ; a forester, in well-brushed velveteen, called Robin Hood, with a horn suspended from his neck ; a purple-faced and burly monk, called Friar Tuck ; and the indispensable Tom Fool, astride of something that seemed a cross between a horse and a dragon. This exhibition served the purpose of the Norfolk "Hollow Largess," as an appeal was made to public sympathy on behalf of the hard-worked labouring man, in a rude lyric, of which the refrain was :—

“ We toil and we moil in the mire and the clay ;
We toil and we moil from morning till night ;
We toil and we moil almost every day,
We toil and we moil as long as it's light.”

The singing was, of course, followed by a collection.

A much less picturesque, and a far less welcome demonstration was made in autumn at the back door of every decent dwelling. The Irish harvest-men, before returning to their own country, assembled in troops, with furbished, brandished sickles, and, with a mixture of blarney and vague terrorism

which it was hard for an unprotected female to resist, would exact a kind of enforced "benevolence" in the shape of victuals, or of coppers, or of both.

I must not omit to note one of the loveliest and heavenliest spectacles I ever gazed upon, and that but once in my life—a perfect lunar rainbow. One night my father came into the house in a state of excited wonder, crying: "Do but look!" and hurried us all out into the garden; and lo! a great stretch of magnificently moonlit landscape was spanned by a celestial arch as absolutely perfect as any solar rainbow ever seen; but far more ethereal, and of a far more impressive spiritual beauty; yet more palpable and solid-seeming than any solar iris. How paltry both in size and splendour is any marble arch that royalty or pride of patriotism ever reared! In my frequent long night walks and drives in country Circuits I have noticed many small suggestive segments of the lunar rainbow, but of that sublime arc which for a few minutes formed the glorious setting of the stately spire of Patrington Church, I have seen no duplicate. My father, who had then for nearly forty years been familiar with all the moods and aspects of the night, had never looked upon the like of that "wonder in the heaven above."

This term at Patrington ended, father's ague-shattered frame was so unfairly worn down that he was obliged to retire from Circuit work. He chose as his retiring place, Belper, four miles from his native village.

Five days were consumed in accomplishing the journey, which could now be comfortably managed in as many hours. First came the inevitable night in Hull. The available hours of the next day were occupied in steaming from Hull to Gainsborough. There we had to spend our second night. I made myself memorable to the Methodist young men of this fair town by an inconsiderate indulgence of my exploratory instincts. When bedtime came I was nowhere to be found. My father and sisters were in vain scattered over the place in search of me. A hue and cry was raised. The kind-hearted Superintendent, John Chettle, raised a posse of enterprising young Methodists to scour the streets and suburbs in quest of the lost lad; for those were the days of *burking*. I was found, at length, by the river-side, oblivious of all time, literally *lost in contemplation* of the beauty of the winding Trent. The next

day was spent in an achievement which I believe is now impossible: a steam trip by river from Gainsborough to Nottingham. It was not an unexciting expedition, as our gallant craft, *The Little John*, during the latter part of its course, was many times aground, and had to be pushed into midstream by means of poles. Saturday and Sunday nights were spent at Nottingham. The next morning a hired spring-cart conveyed the Supernumerary and his tribe to Heanor, twelve miles. Thence we walked three more to Horseley Woodhouse, where we were entertained a fifth night by a hearty farmer, Mr Weston. On the Tuesday morning we tramped the last four miles to Belper.

CHAPTER IV

WOODHOUSE GROVE

WHEN eight years old, I was sent to Woodhouse Grove School.¹ Woodhouse Grove had been the residence of a Quaker gentleman named Elam ; the observatory, in the grove from which the place derived its name, being still in my day called by the country people : "Elam's Tower." It is an interesting fact that the decision to purchase Ackworth School was come to at Woodhouse Grove in the room afterwards known as "the Committee-room." It is much to the credit of the West-Riding that three great denominational schools : Ackworth, Woodhouse Grove, and the famous Moravian School at Fulneck, should be localised within a few miles of Leeds.

Mr Slugg does full justice to the beauty of the situation of "the Grove" ; and he alludes to John Wesley's enthusiastic praise of the locality. The Founder of Methodism calls it "the Capua of Yorkshire," quoting the line :—

"Hic nemus, hic gelidi fontes, hic mollia prata."

"*Here the Grove, here fountains icy cold, here meadows soft and smooth.*" "Here the Grove" seems almost prophetic of the academic retreat where so many sons of Wesleyan-Methodist ministers would acquire the Founder's classic tastes. The walk from the Grove to "Mr Marshall's," where Wesley lodged, down the magnificent, mile-long Esholt Avenue, and skirting Esholt Wood, is, at least was in my day, exquisite. Esholt walk was a more magnificent avenue than it is now, having trees more densely planted on either side. It was despoiled by the mighty wind of January 1836, or 1837, which tore up by the roots many of its grandest giants. The

¹ At this point the *Recollections* refer the reader to some articles on "Woodhouse Grove" written by my father for the magazine of which he was the editor. Portions of these are incorporated with or attached to the *Recollections*, the personal history being given with little alteration in the author's own words. The articles were founded on Mr Slugg's *Woodhouse Grove : Memorials and Reminiscences*.

leaves of the trees in the grove and the garden tasted of the salt spray borne from the ocean fifty miles away ; and a storm-driven Arctic bird, the auk, was picked up panting in Barnsley Street. Up to 1841, when my own close connection with the Grove ceased, the Aire was still "a pellucid stream," save when it overflowed "all its banks," which only happened when heavy and continuous rain came down on Ingleboro and Pendle-hill. The river was then of great volume and velocity ; but this was a rare occurrence. The king-fishers which haunted the stream, and the sand-martins, whose nests honey-combed the highest banks, were not often driven from their homes.

I started with a heart full of hope, and with a mint of money in my pocket, amounting to three shillings and sixpence ! the farewell gift of sympathetic friends. The distance of Woodhouse Grove from Belper, just being close upon seventy miles, it was necessary to spend a night on the way. We left Belper at four P.M. by the stage-coach, which indicated its recklessly defiant speed by its name, *The Telegraph* ; and accomplished the twenty-eight miles to Sheffield in four hours, including stoppages. We left the *Tontine*, Sheffield, the next morning at six, and duly made the *Bull and Mouth*, Leeds, at eleven. There we had the honour of being met by the famous preacher and controversialist, Daniel Isaac, my father's special friend, and taken to the chapel-house, Albion Street, to dine ; on the strength of which meal we walked the remaining eight miles, there being no public conveyance between the Grove and Leeds.

It was a delightful journey. Chesterfield with its twisted spire, Sheffield, Barnsley, Wakefield, Leeds, were great acquisitions ; and in the good old coaching days we did not skirt a town, and see little of it but its smoke ; we drove gallantly down its leading thoroughfares, with prancing steeds and blast of bugle, and stopped for change of horses at the chief inn in the centre of the town : and last and best of all, the majestic ruin of Kirkstall Abbey, glassing itself in the Aire, which even here was, at that time, a pure and pleasant stream.

The first care on reaching the Grove was, of course, to report ourselves to the Governor, the Rev. John Stamp. We found him an imposing personage, tall, portly, of gubernatorial presence, aspect, and comportment : "a lusty man, to ben an

abbot able." He was fresh-coloured, white-headed, erect, and muscular, though in his sixty-eighth year. He wore a long blue coat, that buttoned down before. Like his predecessors and successors in the Governorship, he was of note in the Connexion, having narrowly escaped the Presidency in 1819, when Jonathan Crowther was elected. He was a Northumbrian by birth. His preaching—he still occasionally occupied the Grove pulpit—was deliberate in manner, magisterial in tone, and in substance didactic and dogmatic. The most frequently recurring word in his discourses was "the Law." His portrait whilst fairly representing his proportions and the smoothness of his well-parted silvery locks, does scant justice to his comely English countenance. He was really *good-looking*. When his face was in a state of repose, his lips were slightly parted, and protruded and curved as if he were inaudibly and unconsciously whistling a tune. Of him Mr Joseph Gostick says: "He was a man whose presence agreed well with his character, he was strict in routine, and, perhaps, too firm in command." Mr Slugg continues: "He was cool, decided, and firm. The great mistakes in his governorship were the two occasions when the boys, who were all growing lads from eight to fourteen years of age, were kept without food for something like sixty hours—three nights and two days. But for these errors, Mr Stamp was a wise and efficient governor. He was not unkind, but kept everybody in his place, and lacked what is called, in an other case, the 'grandfatherly' spirit." All this is perfectly true. But it must never be lost sight of that the good fault was in the system, not in the men. With the exception of one junior master, governors and masters all gave abundant proof of genuine kindheartedness and even geniality. And the system was, alas! not peculiar to the Grove, though I have met with nothing either in autobiography or fiction to surpass what I myself saw and felt during the first two years of my Woodhouse Grove experience.

[Some of the new boy's earliest experiences are recounted as follows:]

A schoolboy should reckon his schoolmates amongst his schoolmasters. The playground is an integral part of the gymnasium. No sooner does the boy set his foot upon it, than he must pass a shrewd entrance examination from those into whose fellowship he claims admission. At least so it befell

the writer. After between five and six hours' coaching (literal, not academic), followed by an eight miles "walk," he entered the playground just as the staring clock which formed the frontispiece of the school-room pointed to 5 P.M. The lads were tumbling out of school. "Eh! lads; a new-comer!" shouted the foremost, as they took possession of his person. Then began the catechetical scrutiny, followed by such tests as were at once available.

Big boy: "What can you do?"

New-comer: "Don't know till I try."

Many voices: "How far can you jump?"

New-comer: "Not far."

Thereupon he is confronted by a most perilous-looking jump. "Can you take that?" New-comer doesn't like the look of it, but honour pricks him on. *Think* you can jump, and you *can* jump. The feat is accomplished by virtue of unhesitating recklessness; the curious part of the performance being that the same boy was two full years older before he could repeat the achievement in cold blood; the inevitable consequence of failure being an awkward bump of the back of the head against a sharp stone step.

Physical investigations of this kind took precedence of the redoubtable Head-master's questionings: "How far have you got in Arithmetic?" "Do you know any Latin?" The answer to the latter inquiry provoked a chuckle: "If you please, Sir, I know four words." "Indeed! which be they?" "If you please, Sir, I know that *Ejus Liber* means 'his book.'" "How did you come to know that?" "Please, Sir, it's written in all grandfather's books, and mother told me that's what it means." "Well, what are the other two words?" "Please, Sir, I know that *pietas Oxoniensis* means 'Oxonian piety.'" "Where did you get that?" "If you please, Sir, from Fletcher's *Checks*." This was very modest classic capital to start with for a boy who, as little Charles Wesley said when, a year younger, he found himself at Westminster, "come to be bred a scholar."

There was, of course, a little good-natured, harmless fooling to be gone through, exquisitely amusing to masters as well as scholars. One specimen must suffice. On the first morning before school-time the following dialogue took place between new-comer and J. S. :—

J. S. "You're a new-comer, you know."

"Yes," assented the little lad.

"Well, I know what it is to be a new-comer ; I've been a new-comer myself."

"I suppose so."

"Well, you can't be expected to know all at once all the ways of this place, so I thought I might as well put you up to some of them."

"Thank you."

"Well, you'll notice that when the Master comes in, he'll go straight to his desk, and he'll strike it with his cane."

"Yes."

"Well ; that's what we call a *signal*. Then you'll see that all the boys will at once stand up."

"Yes."

"Well, has any one told you what you're expected to do?"

"No."

"Of course not ; they never told me. And it's very awkward not to know what you have to do. Well, every newcomer the first morning, when the other lads stand up, has to——"

"Stand up too, I suppose."

"Yes, but that isn't all. He must get up on the desk, as fast as ever he can, and then everybody can see who he is, and what he's like."

"Thank you."

All this came true. At the predicted signal the whole school started to its feet. J. S. cast upon the new comer a significant, solicitous and patronising glance. Whereupon new comer scrambled up first on the form, then on the desk, and stood there in conspicuous and expectant self-consciousness. "What's that boy doing there?" demanded the Master. "If you please, Sir," faltered new comer, "one of the young gentlemen told me——" "Young *gentlemen* ! I fear you'll find they are not all such gentlemen as you think." Nevertheless, with very few exceptions, they were gentlemen. There was but one boy in the whole hundred who could fairly be called a bully, and he was obliged to do his bullying on the sly.

During Mr Stamp's governorship "running away" was too common. To the frequent running away three things especially conduced. First: The dietary and sumptuary laws. The

quality of the food was far less to be complained of than the quantity. In plain words, the boys had not enough to eat. Two of the three meals a day consisted of dry bread and milk, except that in winter on two mornings in the week porridge and treacle took the place of bread, and our tin cans held water instead of milk. The bread was delicious, and was intensely popular, except on the rare instances in which the yeast did not rise to the occasion, when the poor lads had to make the best of what their learned humour called *tristis panis*: "sad bread." Hence, daring depredations on the bake-house—which abutted on the playground, sending forth twice a week a seductive savour—and on the bread-bin in the pantry, and on the potato ground, which was divided from the playground by a paling not difficult to scale. These last were clandestinely roasted in "the furnace" by means of which the schoolroom was heated with hot air. The raids on the pantry were made sometimes in broad daylight, but oftener in the night; with an audacity and stealthy vigilant keenness which would have done credit to an Indian scout. But hunger sharpens the senses and strings up the nerves. We have been driven by sheer ravenousness to run the blockade of scullery, hall and kitchen, to snatch a morsel of bread.

The lads supped at half-past five, and breakfasted fifteen hours afterwards at half-past eight, having had in summer two hours' play after supper, and two hours' school before breakfast; and in winter an hour and a half school after supper, and an hour before breakfast, with both morning and evening prayer in the interval, besides singing and prayer at the opening of the morning school. Mondays being washing days, we had but one course at dinner: "Stanley pudding," "diamond pudding," so-called from the suet-crystals with which it was lavishly bespangled. The efficient cause of this display of glistening cubes was the urgency of the washing, which left the cook scant time for minimising the material. The final cause was the stopping our mouths against any pretence of not having seen animal food that day. This crude composition, like the lumpy oatmeal porridge, was far more unpopular than it deserved, for it was the fashion to turn up the nose at both, and stigmatise them with satirical descriptive epithets. When Dick Douglass once ventured, there being but thirteen lads left before the vacation, to ask for a second dole of Stanley

pudding, the act was regarded as a defiance of public opinion. The greater part of Monday's fare being untouched, it was served up again on Tuesday, in baked slices, which were in great request; and certainly the supplementary cooking made a real improvement.

It must be confessed that there was amongst the boys no small amount of affected fastidiousness. But they could not be charged with *quarrelling with their bread and butter*, for they never tasted butter from vacation to vacation: that is to say, from the second week in June to the first week in May; there being but one vacation in the year, and that of but five short weeks.

The meat was altogether unexceptionable; and of this there was no stint. For though there was no second helping, yet every one might have as much as any juvenile appetite could healthily require. "Every one" received "according to his eating," at least according to his asking: "Small," "Common," "Small common," "Large," or "Very large." But "Very large" was seldom ventured on; "Large" not often; the character of glutton, or, as it was called "a gobble," being held in high contempt. Besides, whatever was served out had to be rendered invisible, either by deglutition or by some process as effectual; for dinner being ended, the Governor was wont to make a tour of inspection, uttering what seemed to us the grim pleasantry: "*No marginal references*"; meaning, no bits of meat or of potato or what not at the edge of the plate. This gave an unsavoury association to allusions to the margin. Any residuum whatever was construed into a saucy reflection on the cooking or the commissariat of the establishment. Nothing, but a show of apathy under the severest corporal punishment, so chagrined the Governor as a decided demur to anything which was served up and served out in the dining-room at Woodhouse-Grove. Such were the only occasions on which we ever felt the rough side of the gubernatorial tongue: "Whatever is set before you, eat, asking no question," was the unvarying text for dinner-time. The frontispiece to a favourite book, Voltaire's *Life of Charles XII.*, had a very apt moral for the Grove lad of that period. Beneath a picture of the great warrior critically masticating an unsavoury-looking morsel in the presence of a discontented soldier, there ran this quotation: "It is not good; but it may be eaten." A Super-

numerary's son, who certainly had not lived delicately in king's houses, found before him one day a mess of such uncooked food that no alternative but starvation could render its consumption possible. That alternative was expressly set before him. But Mr Brownell, the second master, a dapper pattern of particularity in dress and person, earned the poor lad's undying gratitude, and raised himself immeasurably in the estimation of the little boys, by transferring the whole mass to his own coat-pocket, with words of muttered sympathy.

But this necessity for disposing of uninviting victuals turned out to the incalculable advantage of a thriving, enterprising colony of brown rats, which had planted the Norwegian flag beneath the boards of the dining-room, the school-room, and its adjunct "the classical room." The Norway rat had not long before made a descent on the English coast, but the Scandinavian invaders had already established with the "preachers' sons" a friendly understanding, based upon reciprocal utility. The rats being well-treated were wonderfully familiar and innocuous. We could furnish Mr Romanes with some very curious instances of *Animal Intelligence* in the genus *School-rat*. In this case, at any rate, the school-rat and the school-boy, being mutually supplementary, foregathered amicably, and affected a tacit *concordat*, which the rodent stuck to *like a Christian*. One lad, John Ash, snatched one up one day, and carried it about the playground as an object-lesson in Natural History. The rat felt "armed so strong in honesty" that it rather enjoyed being lionised, and was let go in good faith. We ourselves, in our usher-days, finding the dining-room the most convenient place for nightly studies, have fearlessly fallen asleep over our book, with three or four able-bodied rats foraging about the place.—Occasionally, however, the boys had a sumptuous supper of apple-pie, when each plate was piled high.

Another incentive to "running away" was greatly aggravated by the very precautions which running away seemed to necessitate: the rigid restriction within "bounds": playground, school-room, dining-room and bedroom. The chapel was in the playground. During the first seven months of my Grove history, I saw nothing of the "natural attractions of scenery" but what was visible from the playground, so infrequent were the delightful "walks" which Grove lads still remember with

such just enthusiasm. When I first looked down the superb avenue called "Esholt Walk," my feelings were not unlike those of the child-prisoner, Kaspar Hauser, when he first beheld the starry firmament, and exclaimed: "O how cruel to keep me all this time from such a spectacle as this!" Esholt Walk was within a mile of Woodhouse Grove.

A third cause of the strained relations between the boys and the Executive, which led to so much running away, was unquestionably the undue resort to corporal punishment. Mr Gostick writes: "The severest beating I ever saw was given to Tom P—." As it was a *crucial* case, it is worth while to touch upon it. "Tom P." was the first boy in the school, and was in his last year. It must be admitted he was rather cynical and "upish." It was geography afternoon, and a new set of Guy's geographies, with bright red binding, had been distributed. It fell to the second master, who wrote a beautiful hand, and wielded the pen as if he were aware of that fact, to write each boy's name in his own book. He began with Tom P's. Tom forthwith fell into an ecstasy of admiration at the master's exquisite calligraphy, and whispered audibly to the second boy: "O! don't you wish you could write like that? What wouldn't I give to come anything near that!" Of course this was meant for stinging insolence, and the second master so resented it. It was intended to annoy, and it succeeded. Incontinently, the second master borrowed the head master's stick (Tom sat just below the head master's desk), and gave his impassioned admirer a succession of sharp strokes upon the fleshy part of his right shoulder. Tom seemed so absorbed in wonder at the exquisiteness of the master's handwriting as to be quite unconscious of the vigour of his blows. He held the page in various lights, and it was only when he had exhausted his vocabulary of commendation, and all the clucks and other inarticulate sounds of intense appreciation, that a pause gave the master a welcome opportunity to leave beating of the boy. The state of Tom P's jacket revealed the state of his shoulder. A surgeon had to be sent for in hot haste; and he, perhaps to frighten the master, expressed his fear that there was no remedy but amputation. Every stroke having fallen on the same spot, the mischief was vastly intensified by being localised. However, poor Tom kept his arm, though he held it in a sling for

many weeks. No doubt the lad's sarcastic complimentariness was but the last ounce of a pile of impertinences which broke the back of the master's patience ; and if either boy or master had foreguessed to what a contest he was committing himself, each would have left off the strife before it was "meddled with." But it was a perilous indiscretion, and as undignified as ill-judged, to descend into the arena, and try conclusions with a proud and plucky urchin who had a reputation to maintain amongst his compeers for unyielding hardihood. No quality was so splendid in the eye of the youngsters, and none so irritating to the Executive, as a Spartan sturdiness, or a North American Indian contempt of pain, under any punishment which was deemed to be either unearned or of a kind or degree which degraded it into torture. Other masters were wise enough never to understand an impertinence which did not amount to a *formal* insult.

It is but right to say that Tom P. retained no rancour in the recollection of a beating which he knew he had drawn upon himself.

The Headmaster during my first three years at the Grove, 1829-1852, was Samuel Ebenezer Parker. He exhibited a strange conjunction of severity and geniality, of drollery and earnestness. *Combination* it could not be called ; for the qualities were not blended, but maintained a contrasted juxtaposition. He was a man of alternations and antitheses. His physique was most imposing and impressive. "He was a strongly built man, six feet high," and weighing nearly seventeen stone. "His stature was tall, and his bulk proportionate, with some exaggeration of the latter from the largeness of his garments. The hair was porcupine fashion, both in stubbornness and direction. The features were firmly set, strongly marked, and readily capable of expressing dark and violent emotions ; but it was easy to persuade oneself that the same face had been beautifully dimpled in childhood. And that rugged and austere visage was often seen to relax into sunny smiles, accompanied by a low and musical chuckle."

The first and predominant impression upon a little boy was inevitably that of awe ; yet, as Mr Shaw¹ says : "He was the soul of humour." He seemed the last man to take a

¹ Rev. William M. Shaw, M.A., sometime vicar of Zealand Conyers—a Grove boy, 1827-1833.

liberty with ; but he was withal remarkably accessible. He did not flog frequently ; but when flogging was what his hand found to do, he did it with his might. The belaboured boy might well say, as "the elfin-page" to Will o' Moffat : "Thou smitest sore." I regard it as one of the special immunities of my early life, that I never felt the force of that muscular arm, and that cutting cane or heavy bludgeon. This escape I cannot but attribute to the marvellous insight into character evinced by Thomas Garrett, youngest son of the famous Philip Garrett, who inherited a full share of his father's shrewdness and good-nature.

Tom had entered the school a few days earlier than myself, so I had the privilege of sitting next to him. At the close of night-school on our first day of work, as the upper classes were filing out, Tom whispered : "What do you think of Tommy ?" "Tommy" being the name by which the Headmaster was familiarly known amongst the boys, though no one could tell how it originated. The reply was an expression of dread. "O !" said the keen-witted lad, "I see how to manage Tommy. Do you notice how he likes the lads to shake hands with him ? I see the way up Tommy's sleeve." By this time it was the turn of the lower class to leave. It must be premised that the redoubtable pedagogue was in the habit of taking snuff. The daring urchin grasped irreverently the Headmaster's graciously offered hand, and looking up into his eyes, said peremptorily : "O ! that wont do ; I want a pinch of snuff." "You audacious little ragamuffin ! How *dare* you talk in that way to *me* ?" "Now, make haste, if you don't want your whiskers pulled," said the lad, making a threatening upward leap. The Headmaster presented his big silver snuff-box to the boy without further hesitation. "And look here," said Tom, amidst paroxysms of sneezing, "don't you see ? here's a new-comer. He wants a pinch too." This also was conceded ; the grim giant giving proof of genuine humanity by the "sincerest laughter." He tickled the two mannikins with terrible ironic menaces as to the consequences of such unmatched effrontery. "There," said Tom, as we ran across the playground to the dining-room for prayer, "you'll see Tommy will never touch either of us as long as we can make him laugh." Tom was right.

The humanising effect of a strong sense of the ludicrous

was memorably manifested in the case of "a boy without a genius" whose most conspicuous feature was that of Sir Walter Scott's ancestress, "a meikle mouth." Parker adopted the interrogatory system of education so far as to accompany his successive blows with a string of questions. Down came the cane on the quivering palm, along with the demand: "Will ye mind your classics?" "Ye-es, Sir," roared the lad in agony. "Will ye do better for the future?" with another "cut." "Ye-es, Sir," vociferated the lad with the portentous jaw-chasm which Anacreon ascribes to lions. "Are ye going to eat me?" cried Parker, varying his wonted Question III. "Ye-es, Sir," roared the boy, not noting in his anguish the new form of question. That happy inattention saved the lad many a blow both then and afterwards.

Governor Stamp, though his movements had the regularity of clock-work, and though he held school-boy stubbornness to be "as iniquity and idolatry," was, at heart, a kind and fatherly man. To his tenderness towards the little boys in sickness Mr Shaw pays the following just tribute: "I never received more loving care in my life than from his hands, and the hands of his three daughters, when once secluded from school for a time." His children loved him. They were all great favourites with the lads, by reason of their affability, gentleness and brightness.

I may give one instance of the Governor's geniality. Next to the fifth of November, the most popular half-holiday of the year was the Boys' Missionary Meeting Day. On that one day in the year the boys were regaled with the lad's great luxury, preserve-pudding—all the richer because it was such a rarity; and the carefully selected speakers were distinguished, like a modern "deputation," by a sumptuous supper. After dinner the Financial Report was read to the Boys' Branch Society, of which every lad was a proud and ungrudging member; for a keen and self-denying interest in Missions was a strong, sweet element in the education at the Grove. In 1831, however, the weekly subscriptions were found to have fallen considerably below the foregoing year's amount. The Governor made an appeal on behalf of our little heathen brothers, which proved far more touching than telling. The pockets of our corduroys were but triflingly affected. At last a bright thought struck the Governor, which twinkled brightly in his eye. He had hit upon a plan for dealing with the

deficit, which would certainly succeed. "Well," said he, "I give you all leave to pelt me and Mr Brownell (the second master, who was standing by his side) with any current money of the realm, on condition that all we pick up shall go into the Missionary-box." We have witnessed many a magical effect of eloquence, but never aught to equal that which instantly ensued. The crusading oratory of Peter the Hermit could scarcely have outdone it. Not, indeed, "a shower of gold," but a pitiless copper hailstorm forthwith came clattering about the heads of the Governor and master. The good-humoured patriarch had his hands preoccupied in "holding both his sides"; he had none at liberty to protect his venerable head. He could only duck and dodge as nimbly as his laughter would allow. No doubt he had shrewdly calculated on what proved his most effectual protection, the almost certain missing of a double and divided aim.

But to return to the immediate subject: the causes of "the frequent running away." One powerful cause was, doubtless, the repression and suppression involved in the silent system, which was rigidly enforced at meal-times and in the bedrooms. The lads were required to take their meals, like monks, in strict ascetic dumbness. The all but absoluteness with which the rule of silence was observed in the ten-crib room during our own first year was very remarkable. No boy ever spoke above a whisper, to be heard only by his nearest neighbour. In my second year, Sam W—— alone broke through the restriction, under the impulse of his genius for comic recitation, which Mr Morley used to get him to exhibit for the entertainment of the family and the visitors. On Mr Morley's arrival, if not the rule, the usage, of silence in the dormitory fell into desuetude.

But worst of all were certain crudenesses of arrangement which, in their *effect*, were painful and harmful, both to the body and the mind. Of these we can only mention two. In those days the little boys suffered sometimes from thirst. No boy was allowed a drop of water from dinner-time to dinner-time, except by special license from a master, which was very charily given, because the pumps were out of bounds; and thirst was often made a mere pretext for trespass.

Another very serious imperfection was in the arrangements for the once-a-day washing. The hundred boys washed in wooden troughs, at which only twelve boys could wash at a

time. As the water was not changed till the whole hundred had completed their ablutions, by the time the later relays of lads were led up to the troughs, the state of things is better imagined than described. Then, the supply of towels was ridiculously inadequate. Hence, in winter-time, most of the younger lads suffered dreadfully from chilblains. Yet notwithstanding all these hardships the healthiness of the boys was wonderful. During Mr Stamp's last two years, which were my own first two years, the immunity from sickness of a hundred boys was marvellous. There was not a single case of serious illness. Our ailments were of the most trivial and transient kind. Not even mumps or measles came within our narrow bounds. And better still, the moral tone was even higher than the physical condition. There was amongst the lads themselves a veritable public opinion, sound, fine and healthy. The slightest approach to coarseness was frowned down at once. Irreverence was hardly ever ventured on, never encouraged. In short, take them for all in all, they were a lot of lads of whom Methodism might well be proud. High-mettled enough! some of us unruly; but no one underbred. All that was to be regretted grew out of a moral misunderstanding between the teachers and the taught; for the teachers and the trainers were themselves exceptionally estimable men.

The clothing was uniform, and consisted of a dark blue cloak, jacket and waistcoat, and corduroy trousers. It should be remembered, however, that at the time when this costume was first adopted it was that of the best boarding-schools in the land. Archdeacon Denison tells us that when he went to a boarding-school near London in 1808, he was provided with a "pair of stiffish corduroys, so stiff that in their new and uncreased condition, with a little adjustment, they might be made to stand upright of themselves."

The cap was of leather. And there is nothing like leather for a head-piece, in respect of plasticity and ready conformation to the cranium. A leather cap soon acquires a character and an individuality. Every boy's cap was at once recognized by himself and by every other boy. It not only took a peculiar configuration from the shape of its owner's skull, but gave subtle intimations of his temperament and habits, which rendered unmistakable its personal identity. Thus the tell-tale cap had its utility for purposes of notice.

Mr Parker was a conscientious, thorough, indefatigable, and devoted teacher. The curriculum at Woodhouse Grove, and the solid attainments of the best lads would compare favourably with the scholastic area and the actual achievement of any school in England, either at that or the present time, considering that no boy was allowed to remain till his fifteenth [? sixteenth] birthday.

[Dr Gregory gives an elaborate account of the classical and mathematical course. The range of reading would startle the present-day schoolboy of fourteen to fifteen—and most schoolmasters, but then little attention was given to Latin and Greek composition. It was distinguished by an initial thoroughness, “the whole of the first year was given to a thorough training in the Eton Latin Grammar.” Mr Shaw says, “as to school work, I was rather idle, and never cared, even after I went to college, to do any more than I could help; but I knew the *construction* of the Latin and Greek languages when I left the Grove about as well as I knew my A B C. With slight intervening preparation, I entered St Catherine’s Hall, Cambridge, at sixteen, about a year after I left the Grove.” He describes how when he went up for his “Little Go,” he “came out in the first class . . . thanks to Samuel Ebenezer Parker and my Grove training.” The mathematics included not only the ordinary course of Euclid and Algebra but the nature and use of logarithms, and a respectable amount of trigonometry. The only modern language taught was French, to which “two afternoons a week” were devoted by the upper half of the school. “There was,” to quote Mr Slugg, “barely another school where boys under fifteen years of age were so fully brought within the range of scientific attainments as were the oldest twenty or twenty-four in the school.” Mr Parker used to give science lectures in the room behind the school-room every Friday evening, and catechized his pupils on the lecture they had heard the night before, the following morning. The school possessed an observatory standing on a low hill, and containing a good telescope. And there was a fair provision of elementary scientific apparatus. By far the weakest part of the school work was the English—the grammar being the smaller Lindley Murray, and the history Goldsmith’s. Our spelling book, says Dr Gregory, was absurd. Some of the “meanings” were vastly less simple than the word to be

explained, *e.g.* "Rice : *an esculent grain.*" Others were misleading such as, "Retrench : *to cut of,*" which deluded a juvenile rhymers in descanting on the glories of British powers, into the ghastly couplet—

"Then the English did *retrench*
Many thousands of the French."

Dr Gregory continues :] The one approach to instruction in the expression of our thoughts in our mother-tongue was on occasion of the monthly home-letter, which was treated as school-work, and was first written on a slate. But this was little more than a lesson in orthography and in reticence. Happily, however, to expedite matters, an elder boy who had finished his letter would be detailed to help over his difficulties some slow-witted or fastidious young composer. John C. Rigg was requested to put the present writer into the way of unexceptionably turning out a home-letter. The future Editor of the *Watchman*, in this case, found dictation much easier than correction ; hence resulted a production which astonished the Methodists of Belper, amongst whom it was circulated as a marvel of precocity. That was the first and last lesson in English composition I ever received.

Mr Parker must have really loved teaching, and he must have felt a genuine and generous interest in his pupils. He offered to teach any one, or any number, of the elder boys Hebrew, German, and Dr Byron's system of shorthand—that used by John Wesley. Several boys acquired the last-named accomplishment ; only one, James Todd, availed himself of the opportunity of learning the sacred language—and only two, Joseph Heap and, I think, Joseph Gostick, were willing to give up part of their play-hour to the study of German. My own first inkling of Hebrew was gained from James Todd. Joseph Heap, who himself became a Co-principal at the justly-celebrated school, Edenfield House, Doncaster,¹ told me that the intellectual benefit he had derived from Mr Parker's patient and enthusiastic German teaching was incalculable. Poor Heap died young, worn out by excessive sensibility and cerebral activity. His was a lovely character and a graceful and athletic mind ; as many treasured letters I received from him bear witness, and as William Morly Punshon, his bosom friend, has often testi-

¹ Perhaps best known from the fact that the late Sir Frank Lockwood was educated there.

fied. Mr Gostick [subsequently Gostwick] has long been known as one of the profoundest German scholars in this country.

Mr Brownell, again, was delighted to teach singing and musical notation to any boy who indicated musical tendencies and aptitudes ; and "a good few" lads placed themselves under his tuition, to their great enjoyment and advantage. He taught us all several first-rate Christmas carols and fine old hymn-tunes, being himself a trained and tasteful singer. Mr Jackson, too, gave lessons in Land-surveying and the use of the theodolite, in "the three-nooked field," and elsewhere. He also taught the use of the sextant to such as would take the trouble to learn. Add to all this our drilling in Mental Arithmetic, and it will be seen that the educational opportunities of "the sons of the prophets" were far from contemptible.

Time for all this multifarious instruction was secured by the closeness and continuity of our schooling. A vast deal may be accomplished in eight hours a day for six years at a stretch, with only five weeks' vacation in the year, and no other break except Christmas Day and Good Friday, Saturday afternoons, the quarterly half-holiday on Committee-day, the Fifth of November, and the Governor's birthday. It was naturally reckoned a serious disqualification in the most popular of Governors that his birthday fell upon the 29th of February. Our school-hours were as follows : In summer we rose at a quarter past five, and had two hours (six to eight) in school before breakfast, then family prayer and breakfast ; school again from nine to twelve, with a merciful sanatory interlude of ten minutes, for the ventilation of the not too-spacious or high-roofed school-room ; dinner at half-past twelve ; school again from two to five, with another break of ten minutes. In winter we were rung up at six : school from seven to eight, from nine to twelve, from two to five, with the two kindly ten minutes ; and, after supper, night-school from half-past six to eight.

Any portrait of Mr Parker which did not make the drollery that formed so strong and strange a contrast to his nervous and prominent feature would be very incomplete. I may give one specimen : to unlock the difficulties of the Iliad, we were supplied with Perkins' *Clavis Homerica*, an antique volume which had for frontispiece a gruesome effigy of the crudite old

Grecist. Beneath this engraving Parker wrote a Latin distich which may be thus rendered :

“What fruit? Eheu! poor Perkins is a ghost!
And who talks Greek on Pluto’s silent coast?”

In other moods, his comic genius would disport itself in the cleverest and the funniest forms of pen-and-ink caricature. One of these sketches was a full-length figure of a Roundhead army-chaplain, a most grotesque, Hudibrastic creation; one of those haunting personations “which seen, become a part of sight.” This he christened *Obadiah Littlebreeches*. It stamped itself so indelibly on my own brain as to serve henceforth as a kind of monitory familiar. The first warning symptom of a febrile tendency is the apparition, before my closed, sleep-courting eyes, of old Obadiah Littlebreeches, first staring in solemn stillness, then shaking his head in menacing rebuke, and then “mopping and mowing” with the most irritating pertinacity.

The versatile pedagogue evidently regarded sarcasm as a legitimate educational appliance, though it must be included amongst the “modes of expressing displeasure and inflicting punishment less proper and defensible” than “stick or cane.” If the muscularity of his arm could not break down the incapacity of a dullard, he would resort to “the scourge of the tongue,” and the point of the pen. He would knock with his knuckles on the low brow of a slow-witted urchin, listen intently, knock again and again, enquiringly, dubiously and with increasing energy, and at last say despairingly: “There’s nobody at home!” If that failed to evoke signs of intellectual life, he had an improvement upon the time-honoured dunce’s-cap. He would write on a placard, in large, bold capitals: *Lodgings To Let Unfurnished*, and paste it on a poor blunderer’s forehead. If he expected this to act upon a sluggish brain like a cantharid plaster, he was sorely undeceived. But, this failing, he would bring into play his powers of caricature. These cartoons of the pedagogic Punch were handed round the school for the entertainment of pupils and of tutors. They cut far more deeply, and left a longer and more quivering smart, than the most savage corporal infliction.

Yet all that has been said in testimony to Mr Parker’s

geniality and fondness for boys who *got on*, is perfectly true. He was overjoyed with any signs of religious earnestness, and was delighted with the eager interest the big boys took in his chemical prelections and experiments; and he enjoyed as much as any lad the discomfiture with which the bursting of a retort would send the whole *posse* laughing downstairs.

Sometimes, indeed, he would castigate a whole class *seriatim* with unquestionable impartiality; as when, for instance, the entire ten were completely mastered by Sallust's philosophic preface to his Catiline; when it was morally certain that some of them, at least, had done their very best.

In fine, in Samuel Ebenezer Parker "the elements were so mixed up" as to form a personality perfectly unique. His massive physique was most imposing.

Then, Mr Parker's miscellaneous acquirements, versatility of genius and strong contrasts of character very hard to correlate, lent plausibility to the vague legends of his early life which threw about the thunderer a nimbus of almost mythic wonderment. It was known that he was born in America, "the son of a sea-captain," whether mercantile or naval, tradition did not tell. It was thought the latter, as the name of Parker had long been famous in our naval annals. Samuel E. Parker was said to have been a favourite and protégé of a royal Duke, and to have sacrificed brilliant prospects to preserve his Methodism. One of the fingers of his right hand was mutilated, it was said by his own act, to escape being drawn for the militia. No one questioned his possessing the resolution and the hardihood required for such an act. Nevertheless, very few militia-men could work a gun with such deadly precision; and he was just as deft with pen and cane and fiddlestick.

Much as there was in Mr Parker to admire and even love, and splendid as were many of his qualities as a schoolmaster, which were warmly acknowledged by his brighter pupils, Mr Slugg does not at all exaggerate the sudden sense of enfranchisement experienced by at least the average Grove-lad when, on the return from the vacation of 1832, the very definition of "the Grove" seemed changed by the news that Mr Parker, disgusted and appalled with the radicalism of England, had transferred himself to the United States. Many a leather cap went

whizzing into the air, to be kicked up again on its descent, and many a grotesque gyration did the honours at the close of an unusually successful pedagogic career.

Mr Parker became the Principal and Classical-Master of a school in Philadelphia. The only tidings we heard of him after his emigration, besides the publication of his *Logic* and other works, were derived from an American newspaper, sent to one of the Masters at the Grove, containing the following advertisement:—

“On . . . the . . . of . . . a Lecture will be delivered in . . . Philadelphia, by Samuel Ebenezer Parker, proving that the Earth is an Animal which breathes twice in the Twenty-four Hours; Causing the Phenomenon of the Tides.”

In 1847 Mr Parker closed his strange career in the full triumph of faith.

Mr Parker's part in the religious training of his pupils was not less remarkable than his influence on their intellectual development. He would tell the boys his “experience,” and never tire in speaking of the Saviour's love. After the fag of teaching for many hours, he would remain at the school from five to six, and conduct a prayer meeting at which always twenty or thirty boys attended, in the chapel. He was a very good singer, and taught the boys many tunes suitable for such occasions and generally set them. . . . He gloried in a revival. [Subsequently he developed symptoms of religious mania.] In a letter he gives an account of some terrible disclosures as to future punishment which had been granted to him in answer to prayer. This letter is of profound interest to those who were in almost daily contact with him during the last three years of his Head-mastership. He concludes thus :

“I asked to be shown how a wicked man died, and how his unhappy spirit entered the eternal world. This was the most awful revelation: I could describe it better if you were here, but I scarcely can by letter. Many other things were shown unto me. All these happened when I was quite awake, many of them by daylight, and all of them when in enjoyment of perfect understanding. . . . A similar power was given me in preaching. Many good effects followed, amongst them forty of our boys were convinced of sin under a sermon I preached to them from “O earth, earth, earth, hear the word of the Lord!” And after this we had such a revival at Woodhouse Grove as I never knew before. Out of one hundred boys, ninety-three joined us.”

This "awful revelation" of "how an unhappy spirit entered the eternal world" he described from the pulpit on a Sunday in 1829; the effect may be imagined. H. T., a strikingly handsome lad, who became a missionary, went off into a fainting fit, and during the ensuing week school-work was almost impossible, and indeed next to nothing was attempted, and play was discouraged and discontinued for a considerable time.

Mr Parker was a man of big brain, as well as huge bulk. He published several works. His *Protestant's Protest against Catholic Claims* is a smart and trenchant popular exposure of the errors of Popery, after the style and on about the same plane as Simpson's *Plea for Religion and the Sacred Writings*. His *Logic*, published after he went to America, was at the time the best book for the use of self-taught students of the science: as a sort of *Logic without a Master, or Every Man his own Professor of Logic*. But it is mainly a popularisation and still further simplification of Whately. Parker's *Arithmetical Grammar* is his most remarkable production. To an impressible young mind it is very thought-provoking. The coming upon one passage in it, at the age of nine, made an epoch in my mental history. Just before the serviceable jingle:—

"Thirty days have September,
April, June and November,"

came these lines:—

"TIME, of itself, is nothing; but from Thought
Receives its rise; by labouring Fancy wrought
From things considered; whilst we think of some
As present, or as past, or yet to come:
No thought *can* think of *time*, that's still confessed,
But thinks of *things*, in motion or at rest."

These lines, by awakening my attention to the ideality of Time, conjured up into my brain the beckoning sprite of metaphysical inquiry.

Our second master, Mr Brownell,¹ had been at the Grove

¹The first examiner at Woodhouse Grove was the Rev. Patrick Brontë, B.A., the curate at Hartshead, afterwards incumbent of Haworth, father of Charlotte and Emily Brontë. Mr Fennell, afterwards the Rev. J. Fennell, who was the uncle of Mrs Brontë, was the first Head-master and the first Governor of Woodhouse Grove School; and it was from her uncle's house at Woodhouse Grove that Miss Bramwell, a Cornish Methodist, related to the well-known Methodist family, the Canes of Penzance, was married to Mr Brontë. Mrs Gaskell, in her *Life of Charlotte Brontë*,

almost from its opening ; had enjoyed the advantage of Mr Parker's thorough, tasteful and mind-awaking teaching, and had learnt from him the stern traditions and principles of the olden pedagogy. He knew well all he had to teach, and taught it with vigour, and sometimes with vivacity. He manifested Mr Parker's generosity as well as his severity ; and his keen sense of the ludicrous, and his fondness for anecdote and apologue relieved the monotony of school routine. He did all he could to soften the asperities of learning.

Mr Brownell's physique was, in most respects, the antithesis of Mr Parker's : he was thin, pale, narrow-chested and dyspeptic, and versed in a variety of excruciating headaches. His large aquiline nose gave an antique quaintness to his countenance. He was scrupulously neat, indeed, almost dapper, in his dress. Though he could be terribly severe on impertinence and insubordination, there was nothing wanton or wayward or fitful in his punishments, excepting when Mr Parker's sudden disappearance and the Governor's absence at Conference threw upon him accumulated duties for some four months. After Mr Parker's withdrawal from the spiritual concerns of the scholars, this oversight was divided amongst the Governor, the second-master, and the superintendent of the Circuit.¹

Mr Brownell had a remarkable freshness and fluency in prayer. This gift was of real value, as he always opened school with extempore prayer, and alternated with the Governor in leading the family devotions. His preaching, too, was original and *matterful*, though not brilliant. It dealt closely and deeply with Christian experience, and was of the genuine Methodist type : unpretentious, earnest, simple, fervid, real and direct. He was greatly respected and looked up to in the neighbourhood. I ardently welcome the opportunity of recording my grateful memory of his fatherly attentions. Nothing could exceed the tenderness, delicacy, unobtruseness and unofficiousness of his encouragement. His seemingly incidental words

represents Mr Fennell as being already a clergyman at the time of Mr Brontë's marriage. He did not become a clergyman till years afterwards. We remember him well. He had a prompt, peremptory look and bearing, much more like that of a pedagogue than that of a parson.

¹ On account of certain doctrinal eccentricities, fully described in Dr Gregory's articles, the authorities first forbade Mr Parker the Grove pulpit, and then all participation in religious instruction.

of cheer were always tempered by a tone and air of grave respect, which evidently flowed from reverence for the Spirit's work upon an opening human heart. The occasional quotation of an enlivening passage of Scripture, the gift—not the loan—of some choice new book of devotion or experimental religion, such as Dr Richard Winter Hamilton's eloquent sermons on *Prayer*, the taking one out with him in the summer-time when he went into some neighbouring Circuit to preach Sunday school sermons, and the free spiritual fellowship on the way; and perhaps, above all, the dropping the surname and even the Christian name in talk, and using instead the word "Boy," explaining: "That was the name my father always gave to me"—all this was most helpful and endearing. All who saw much of Mr Brownell during his last two years at the Grove must remember a wonderful change which came upon his spirit, look and tones, when, after a stern struggle and a sharp surrender, he secured the hidden treasure of Perfect Love.

I visited him twice in his first Circuit, Derby, where his ministry was greatly valued and enjoyed, and his pastoral diligence and sympathy endeared him to his flock. His retiring, self-suppressing habits, and the lack of an easy, pleasant, natural delivery, kept him back from the prominent position for which his superior attainments, preaching-power, general capacity, deep piety and indefatigable devotion to his work so clearly marked him out. With an effective and attractive manner, he could not but have been a telling speaker. But a preacher whose deliverances might have been described by a Yorkshireman as "rare guid watter, but a stiff pump-handle," and by a Lancashire man as "fuss-rate sermons, if he could but get shut on 'em gradely" (gracefully), was put to serious disadvantage.

The most popular of the Grove masters of the period was the third—Mr Henry H. Chettle. The grounds of his popularity were at once solid and patent. He was a strikingly handsome young man, of vigorous constitution, and with a fine flow of spirits, and the cheerfulness, good humour and good temper which high-toned health makes easy. He was the only master who joined in the more athletic games of the playground. This was very ingratiating; he always gave the lads fair odds to compensate for the advantage he derived from his height and strength. He was a "Kingswooder"; and in

his case, as in others, the northern nonchalance and brusqueness which characterised the Grove lad pure and simple, was softened by an air of southern grace and courtesy. He could take in good part a harmless roguish pleasantry at his own expense. These qualities and experiences served to fit him for the eight years' able Governorship of the school which closed his active ministry.

Though he was too distrustful of his pupils' honour (the surest and the shortest way of killing school-boy honour), and too unrelaxing in his maintenance of harsh and overdrawn restrictions, yet he was exceptionally sympathetic; and, barring a sharp occasional impromptu stroke, we cannot remember a single instance of his beating a boy during the time of our own pupilage. Mr Chettle, almost from the very first, found his level in our highest Circuits.

"At the time of Mr Stamp's death the Rev. Richard Treffry was stationed at Leeds, and the Rev. John H. Adams was superintendent of the Woodhouse Grove Circuit . . . and these two ministers were requested by the Committee jointly to fill the office of Governor until the Conference; Mr Adams, owing to the contiguity of his residence, taking the chief share of the work" (*Slugg's Woodhouse Grove*). The Grove felicitated itself heartily on the contiguity which gave to Mr Adams "the chief share of the work" of government. Of Mr Treffry, his fellow-countyman, Dr George Smith truly says: "His manner was rough, and sometimes approached harshness and austerity; yet he possessed great tenderness of feeling and kindness of heart." More decisive disqualifications for the governorship of a great school can scarcely be found than a "rough manner," an approach to "harshness," and "the appearance of austerity and discourtesy." That Mr Treffry "possessed great tenderness of feeling and kindness of heart" some still living could warmly testify. But towards the sons of his brother ministers, when they had the honour to be his guests, his "harshness and austerity" of manner hardened into gruffness and crabbedness, and his kind and tender side was carefully concealed. As the Birmingham coach left Leeds at half-past five A.M., and there was no public conveyance between The Grove and Leeds, and as Mr Treffry was then a widower with no family, the preacher's house adjoining the old "Boggard House" chapel, which he then

occupied, was turned into a kind of caravansera for boys who were going southward at the vacation. In May 1830, twelve of us were billeted in that venerable Methodist manse. During the whole supper-time Mr Treffry never spoke a syllable, except in menacing repression of the exuberant spirits of school boys on their way home after some eleven months of unbroken absence. It was my own lot to be his solitary guest at breakfast on the return journey. It was a silent *tête-à-tête*. From "Grace before Meat" to "Grace after Meat" not a word escaped his lips. He "sat like his grandsire cut in alabaster." This dumb and distancing treatment of young lads must have been with him a matter of principle and educational theory, not of feeling or of disposition. In his ex-Presidential year, 1834, he issued a book with the playfully-alliterative title: *Conversations Concerning Children, Published for the Perusal of Parents*. It was a private and confidential communication of a parent to parents. His conversations concerning children are much more frank and genial than his conversations *with* children. That Richard Treffry, senior, was replete with true fatherly feeling must be felt by every one who reads his memoirs of his two noble sons; and his *Conversations about Children*, besides being "full of wise saws and modern instances," reveal a genuine kindliness of mood.

One cause of Mr Treffry's unpopularity at the Grove was his hostility to the favourite game of marbles. "Playing marbles," he says, "I think seriously objectionable, because it is unfavourable to health, as it requires no muscular exercise, as it places the body in a position inclining to prostration; and what, perhaps, is worse, it often awakens irascible passions and fierce contentions among boys, and leads to trick, artifice, and deception." To declare *taws* to be *contraband of war*, and to make a Grove lad empty his pockets of all his store of *potties*—plain or painted—*stonies* and *alleys*, was looked on as a more Visigothic act than the deportation of the Elgin marbles from Athens to the British Museum. What an important part marbles played in Grove life may be guessed from the fact that when "Jerry Thompson," years after he left school, touched at the Cape, *en route* for India, as he leaped ashore, ran up against another Grove lad, J. P. Archbell, his immediate salutation was: "Eh, Jerry, let's have a game at *taws*!" Whereupon Archbell brought out from his pocket a

handful of marbles, and describing a circle on the ground, the two fell into "a position inclining to prostration," and gave themselves up to a game at "ring-taw."

Mr Treffry was scrupulously neat in his attire, and always well-dressed, in the blackest and the best-brushed broadcloth, and woe worth the urchin who appeared in his presence with unloosed shoe-string or necktie turned awry! Richard Treffry was a memorable Methodist preacher, well worthy of his place in the lengthening roll of Presidents of the Conference of the people called Methodists, and of his honoured resting-place amongst his fellow-labourers in City Road. If he had chosen a motto for his tombstone, it might well have been one of his favourite texts: "I hate the work of them that turn aside."

John H. Adams was, externally at least, as unlike his co-Governor as one good Methodist minister could be to another. He was tall and thin, and his manners were urbane and supple. It is recorded of a Roman emperor: "He was bland rather than benign." Mr Treffry was much more benign than bland. Mr Adams was both benign and bland. He had for several years been stationed in or near Paris. Woodhouse Grove was his first Circuit after his return. He had unconsciously acquired a Parisian polish and politeness, and half-dramatic deportment. His great educational achievements at the Grove were the teaching us the Parisian pronunciation of the French tongue, and regard to the letter *h* at the beginning of an English word. One lad suggested that John H. Adams was a modern instance of prophetic naming. But, despite his exaggerated aspirates and his Gallic gestures, he was greatly respected by the boys. His working hypothesis was: "Every Grove boy is a gentleman, and is to be treated as such."

In August 1831 the arrival of the new Governor was awaited with hopeful and yet anxious interest. It was felt that in promoting the Rev. George Morley over the trees, the Conference had done its best for the academic shades. Was he not one of the magnates of Methodism? Was he not the ex-President? Had he not been for six successive years the Senior Missionary Secretary, with such colleagues as Richard Watson and John James?

The new Governor's personal appearance was most prepossessing. He was of large dimensions. A rich English bloom overspread his fine open countenance. His broad,

round, smooth forehead, and fully developed bumps of benevolence and veneration, laid bare by incipient baldness, beseeemed the pioneer in a great missionary movement. He was the acknowledged "founder of the Wesleyan-Methodist Missionary Society," and took the leading part in its organisation. He was in his sixtieth year, yet seemed in robust and ruddy health, though his silken locks were snowy white. His voice was as clear as a bell. His port and presence were those of "a fine old English gentleman." His nose and the upper part of his face were strikingly like the busts of Socrates; and he had already begun to gather something of the unwieldy and ungainly bulk of that greatest of philosophising moralists. Like that grandest of the Greeks, he heartily enjoyed pleasantries at his own expense, and delighted in the companionship of the young. The Socratic element in his character and mental structure was apparent in the sententiousness of his utterances, in the truth and quickness of his moral instincts, and in his method of instruction by direct and pointed question and personal appeal. For range and accuracy of general information I have scarcely ever met his match. His mental alimentiveness was enormous. He had read the *Encyclopædia Britannica* straight through; and, so far as I could judge, had digested it. His interest in all matters, literary, political and scientific, was keen and insatiable. His conversational resources seemed exhaustless. If intellectual stores required stowage, his mental measurement must have far outstretched his bodily proportions. The eagerness with which, in advanced life, he read new books was as wonderful as his easy mastery of their contents.

Yet withal he was a thorough man of business, and nothing of a bookworm; as the Conference rightly judged in selecting him for some of the most laborious Connexional offices. Like John Wesley, he only spent one-fourth of the twenty-four hours in bed. The drowsiness which sometimes stole over him in public, and was usually condoned as an infirmity resulting from his corpulence, was much more due to his placid temper and abbreviated rest. Mr Morley's generosity, his indulgence, his cheerfulness, his catholicity, it is beyond my power to portray.

It was an inestimable privilege to spend ten years—the whole second decade of one's life—under the same roof with Mr and Mrs Morley. For Mr Morley's outward lot presented in one special respect an enviable contrast to that of the wise

Athenian. He was blest with the most obedient, sympathetic and devoted wife, "a help meet for him." On reading the antique epitaph on a Christian lady in Chilham Church, which describes her as "to her husband most *obsequious*," taking the word in its beautiful original sense—of frank, respectful, cordial compliance—we instinctively recalled the perfect wifeliness of Mrs Morley.

Mr Morley's first policy was evidently tentative. He went softly. His movements had nothing of the peremptoriness so well expressed in the two strong monosyllables: *John Stamp*. For the first year, at least, he was much too easy-going, and amongst a hundred lads there were sure to be some who would take advantage of his leniency and indulgence. So long as Mr Parker remained, and the old dispensation was in full force in school-hours, the growing licence was kept in check. But some of the bigger boys began to practise a detestable bullyism on the playground and in the bedroom. The healthy public opinion which had prevailed gradually lowered. Egregious practical jokes were played upon the Governor, which he could not, or would not, understand; deliberate and repeated impertinences were allowed to pass unpunished, till, in the dining-room at least, insubordination had almost become the order of the day. In short, affairs swung to the opposite extreme to that which we have above described; and the event proved that practically it is decidedly the worse extreme. Mr Morley seemed to think that in Methodist ministers' sons the native lawlessness of human nature was reduced to a very manageable minimum, either by transmitted grace or by a gracious domestic discipline. He was rudely undeceived. When the redoubtable head-master disappeared, and the Governor—whose reverend, paternal presence would have precluded any general outbreak—had taken coach to Conference, and the second-master, being left in charge, attempted to protect himself against just censure, and the boys against the risks of their own recklessness, the mischief suddenly came to a head, in a catastrophe described as "the Great Rebellion."

The sort of Methodist "Marseillaise" hymn with which the lads tried to keep up their own courage and to intimidate the masters was of multiple manufacture. The canvas flag, which was flaunted before the masters' eyes, bearing in large capitals the inscription, *Justice, Liberty, and our Rights*, was

the production of a boy who, when he became a master and minister, still preserved it as a memento. The "rebellion" might have become a very serious affair had it not been brought under by Mr Brownell's sagacity and skill, and the nerve, resolution, and physical strength of the youngest master, and the respect which the boys entertained for these and his still higher qualities. It was a wise and merciful resolution that only the ringleader should be expelled.

But it would be wrong to attribute this wild insurrection to the relaxation of discipline alone. It was but a dimpling eddy from the great political swirl which had stirred the nation to its depths. This was the year of the first Reform Bill. During the vacation—which had been extended from five to eight weeks, on account of the raging of cholera at Apperley Bridge—the political crisis had been at its height. Within those two months—May and June—the Reform Bill had been thrown out, the ministry had resigned, the people had rushed to the brink of revolution, the ministry had been recalled by the King in terror, the Bill had passed and received the Royal assent. All this had come about since the playground rang with the vacation song :—

"We're all going home together
Upon the fifth of May!"

When the boys reached home "men's hearts" were "failing them for fear, and for looking after those things" that should be. Every prayer in the pulpit or at the family altar was tremulous with deprecation of impending civil war. Disloyal, revolutionary ballads were sung and sold from street to street. Everywhere the populace were proclaiming what, with a significant and sinister mis-pronunciation, they called the "*levelution*." Such was the state of things in the Northern and Midland counties, at least. Before the lads left home again, the whole country was delirious with rejoicings: oxen roasted in the market-places, tables spread in the streets, bannered processions of the population, led by the principal townsfolk; the whole island ablaze with bonfires and illuminations. A kind of political *parousia* was proclaimed.

And when the lads got back, lo! the stout-hearted, strong-handed Mr Parker had fled before the deluge of democracy, and there was no fear of his return. Mellis Douglas brought

back, all the way from Aberdeen, a song that went to the blood-stirring air: "A hundred pipers an' a', an' a'!"

"Reform is routing 'em a', 'em a',
 Reform is routing 'em a';
 Slavery's deeing,
 And Tyranny's fleeing,
 And Liberty's shouting, Huzza! Huzza!
 And Liberty's shouting, Huzza!"

Another cause had conduced to this catastrophe. A number of exciting books had been brought to the school by one boy or another. Lads, who read nothing else, devoured the lives of William Wallace, of William Tell, and of Hofer, Miss Porter's *Scottish Chiefs*, and a history of Washington and the American War of Independence. A West Indian missionary's son brought an inflammatory narrative of the negro insurrection under "Three-fingered Jack"; and, last of all, Bill Savage brought a *Life of Spartacus*, a name which he forthwith assumed, and a character which he affected with heroic airs. Bill had an excitable and adventurous genius, which at last found its true sphere in the Canadian Mission field. He was all right so long as he was singing his father's popular Revival parodies, such as the *Saint's Sweet Home* and the *Canadian Boat Song Spiritualised* :—

"Blow, breezes, blow ye gales of grace!
 The haven of glory's our landing-place."

But, just then, the military spirit was sweeping all before it.

Mr Slugg says, in describing "the rebellion": "Under the generalship of the bigger boys, the rest were formed into regimental order . . . were marched out in line," etc. This was readily done, as every boy was accustomed to this kind of drill; and for many previous months the whole school had been ranged into hostile camps—"Push-battles," representing land engagements, and "hop-battles," fought on one leg, did duty for sea-fights. The campaigns of the Servile War had been fought through under the command of consuls in corduroy, confronting sublime slave-heroes in leathern helmets. The platform at the farther end of the school-room, on which stood two masters' desks, had been idealised into Bunker's Hill; and the long-lying snow in January and February had been beaten into bastions and redoubts. "H'e ye gotten Bonyparte,

thee-er?" asked Billy Graham, the tailor, whose knowledge of "*Profane History*" did not extend beyond his own times.

"The rebellion" collapsed. Unhappily, of the lads of light and leading very few were left. Hence resulted a disastrous subsidence alike in the religious, moral and scholastic level, not unlike those which Wesley sometimes had to deplore at Kingswood, and which he took such vigorous means to redress.

Meanwhile many external improvements were effected. The diet was enriched, and all that could fairly be objected to was altered.

The new head-master, Mr Gardiner, like Mr Morley, was evidently bent on trying first the gentlest modes of government. He had the advantage of a military figure and a military bearing, and in contrast with Mr Parker was scrupulously attentive to neatness of dress. He was long-limbed and long-visaged, as tall as his predecessor, but, unlike him, spare, and with a mild expression of countenance. He had some valuable gifts in a schoolmaster. He knew how to turn the laugh upon a conceited lad inclined to pertness, and make him look very small and silly. He did all he could to make Cæsar and Homer interesting. He was a punctual, hard-working, conscientious teacher. "He manifested continually a simple, child-like trust in God." His humility was touching.

On his arrival the school-chaplaincy reverted to the head-master. He always gave out the same hymn, and himself raised the same tune. The hymn was an old Scottish ditty, far from unsuitable to the daily occasion. It began:—

"He ran and fell upon his neck,
Embraced and kissed his son;
The grieving prodigal bewailed
The follies he had done."

This he sang with tremulous pathos, and injudiciously with eyes strenuously shut.

Another circumstance tended much to loosen the reins of discipline. When it was resolved to build a new chapel, the question of ways and means was, of course, found to be urgent. When it had been determined to purchase the Woodhouse Grove estate, Dr Clarke entreated "that not a single tree on the estate should be cut down." His wish had been respected,

and, for twenty years, "no feller had come up against" the noble elms and beeches of the Grove. But now the Committee resolved upon a great fall of timber, the proceeds of which were to be devoted to the building fund. A saving was effected by letting the lads loose into the Grove on holidays to drag the trees to a convenient place for loading. In haymaking time also a score of boys would, nothing loth, be detailed to turn the hay. All this was very "jolly"; but it gave facilities for opening communications with the "Bridge-lads," which were far from favourable to the manners or the religiousness of the preachers' sons. Perilous encounters took place which might have had disastrous issues.

This reactionary leniency had a deplorable effect. By the vacation of 1833 not a single boy made any profession of religion, and one or two became, as Wesley describes a Kingswood boy of his own time, "exquisitely wicked." During the vacation, however, one of the wildest lads was converted, and on his return to school persuaded twelve of his schoolfellows to "begin to be religious," as the phrase then was. But the fickleness of boyhood, the strict notions of religious consistency, and the conviction that nothing short of a whole-hearted consecration is of any worth, which belong to the simple piety of youth, the extreme sensitiveness of a boy's conscience, and the difficulty which most boys felt in combining earnest play with earnest godliness, soon reduced the little class to five: James Smetham, Thomas M'Nicoll, Richard Eland, Joseph Eckersley, and the lad-leader.

Such was the state of things, when, in the winter of 1833-4, the Rev. Robert Aitken, M.A., whose preaching had produced prodigious effects in Leeds, requested permission to preach a sermon to the preachers' sons. Robert Aitken, the father of the great revivalist, the Rev. W. H. M. H. Aitken, was himself a revivalist of the very highest class. Robert Aitken was blessed with a stalwart, muscular physique; he had leonine locks and leonine lungs. He came to the Grove accompanied by a strong band of Leeds prayer-leaders, such as "Benny Pollard," who gave to the singing a vast volume and a mighty swing. His gown and bands by no means weakened the impression made by his imposing personality.

He began the service subduingly, by giving out, with intense feeling and ardent aspiration, the hymn:—

"Lord, I believe a rest remains
 To all Thy people known,
 A rest where pure enjoyment reigns,
 And 'Thou art loved alone."

He seemed surcharged with earnestness and spiritual force :
 "full of power by the Spirit of the Lord." He had an air and
 tone of awe-inspiring *immediateness*. His prayer was short
 but urgent. Like Ulysses, as described by Homer :—

"Forth from his breast he poured a mighty cry."

His text was admirably chosen : "By faith Noah, being warned
 of God . . . moved with fear, prepared an ark *to the saving of
 his house*." He addressed himself to the conscience, mainly
 through the imagination and the sensibilities, yet not without
 appeal to the intelligence. He showed the rationality of "fear"
 when the warning comes from God, the irrationality of casting
 off fear and restraining prayer before God. He described with
 overwhelming power the scene which followed Noah's last
 rejected appeal to the impenitent, and the *shutting in* of Noah
 and his family into the ark : "And then there fell upon the
 mocking crowd a silence, *the offspring of fear*. And *then the
 wind began to rise*." This was said with such dramatic and
 realistic effect that a cold shiver seemed to shake the closely-
 packed congregation, and there was an involuntary glance
 towards the door, as if it had suddenly been blown open and
 a gust of wintry wind were rushing in. But, of course, the
 point most pressed was the fact that Noah had prepared the
 ark "to the *saving of his house*"; that this was the intention of
 the Divine warning, and was included in the Divine plan of
 salvation ; and that the first anxiety of "a preacher of right-
 eousness" is "the saving of his house." He showed what a
 fatal infatuation it would have been if any members of Noah's
 family had refused the confinement and despised the shelter of
 the *ark that was prepared for their salvation*, and what an
 aggravated doom theirs must have been. He then appealed
 to the preachers' sons with tremendous pathos ; dwelling on
 such points as their fathers' success in the salvation of others,
 and the terrible final severance of parents and sons which must
 be the result of a neglect of "so great salvation."

The effect was immediate and immense. Josiah Pearson
 was the first to burst into a loud sob and throw himself on his

knees, as did immediately afterwards all the other boys who sat in the body of the chapel, with one exception. The ten who sat in the singing pew seemed comparatively unaffected. This might be partly accounted for by the fact that, having their backs to the pulpit, they could not see the preacher, and thus missed all the effect of his pleading look and gesture ; and that having their faces towards the congregation they were under greater restraint. Mr Aitken at once broke off his discourse, and left the pulpit to point the individual mourners to Christ. The Rev. B. Frankland, senior, then on a visit to the Grove, gave out : " Spirit of faith, come down." The prayer-meeting was continued for more than two hours. The cries of the young penitents were heart-rending. At the close of the meeting by far the larger number of the boys gave their names, as resolved to meet in Class. Mr Aitken's strong accent, and the hoarseness of his stentorian voice, the result of preaching and revival services, night after night, for some weeks past, and the perspiration streaming down his face and dripping on his gown and gleaming on his thick, unshorn locks — which reminded one of John the Baptist, the great preacher of repentance—all this added much to the impressiveness of the scene.

The next morning, after breakfast, Mr Aitken conducted the family worship, and exhorted the converts "with purpose of heart" to "cleave unto the Lord." He gave out with thrilling tenderness, the hymn :—

" Jesus, great Shepherd of the sheep,
To Thee for help we fly :
Thy little flock in safety keep ;
For *O ! the wolf is nigh.*"

The tone and look were unforgettable with which he gave out that fourth line, and the words :—

" Us into Thy protection take,
And gather with Thy arm ;
Unless the fold we first forsake,
The wolf can never harm."

" *We laugh to scorn his cruel power,
While by our Shepherd's side.*"

He then exhorted all to enter at once into covenant with God, and to *stand to the covenant* : that is, to rise to their feet

as a public pledge that they were God's vowed and covenanted servants. The Governor, in his own mind, did not approve of this; he thought it might prove a snare to some. A few did not rise at the moment, but when the Covenant Hymn was given out, of course all arose, as was the rule when singing hymns. The day being Saturday, the half-holiday was by most of the boys devoted to singing and prayer. The next day, the Quarterly Love-Feast being held at the Grove Chapel, the boys were admitted, and the young converts were greatly animated and encouraged. The Rev. Elijah Jackson, who was then one of the masters, says:—

“The genuineness and extent of the good work were the most strikingly developed on the Monday night following. After the boys had all gone to bed, and the lights extinguished, the sounds of prayer were heard in what was known as the “ten-crib room.” Immediately all the beds in the room were vacated, and their occupants were on their knees, praying either for themselves or others. The sacred flame burst out in the two other dormitories, containing forty-five cribs each. Lights were obtained. Nothing was seen or heard but prayers, tears and exultations. With one solitary exception, every boy professed to have found peace with God. This one held out, but some years afterwards he wrote to the narrator that the impressions made upon his mind by what he had seen and felt that night never left him until he was savingly converted. The hallowed influence of that night was not confined to the boys. The masters held a prayer-meeting in their own room, which lasted far into the night. The servants had their prayer-meeting in their own room, and most, if not all of them, were saved. Many of the boys have since filled honourable and influential posts, some as ministers and some as laymen, in the Church of their fathers.”

It was, indeed, “a night much to be remembered.” As my “crib” was in the “ten-crib room,” I witnessed the beginning of the movement. Two of the singing-pew boys, who had hitherto held out, belonged to that room, and as the rest were holding a prayer-meeting, first one and then the other suddenly broke forth with a great and bitter cry of penitence. It was this which roused the lads in the adjoining room, and then in the upper dormitory. The Governor and the masters came and gave direction to the impromptu service.

For some months Woodhouse Grove presented a spectacle which would have made the heart of Wesley dance for joy. The whole establishment: boys, masters, servants, were intent on living thoroughly Christian lives. All the masters threw

themselves into the work with all their heart and mind. Mr Brownell was a minister, and three others soon became such. Mr Meek became the eminent Methodist layman of Macclesfield. But, with rare discretion, they, for the most part, let the boys carry on the work in their own way, hold their own prayer-meetings and fellowship-meetings. Most of the boys felt that this was "a tide in the affairs" of their souls which must be "taken at the flood," and that their parents' prayers were being answered. The letters of that month carried gladness to many a minister's heart and home. Punishment for a time seemed obsolete, and every weekly court-day was a maiden assize. The genuineness of the revival was proved, as in the case of that under Mr Parker, by a most perceptible and long-lasting elevation of the moral tone of the whole school. The only instance I have ever witnessed of persecution for *unrighteousness*' sake was that of the "one solitary boy" who refused to make profession of religion. I was obliged to interpose on his behalf, to protect him against the impatient zeal of the new converts.

Mr Aitken had, in the devotion of his own sons to the service of Christ, an appropriate reward for his care for the sons of Methodist ministers. His interest in Methodism itself he showed by giving a chapel to the Methodists of the parish in the Isle of Man, of which he had been the clergyman.

In 1838 the school was blessed with another great revival. This was occasioned by the death of one of the boys, Samuel Sierra Leone Brown, whose middle name indicated the place of his birth, his father having been a missionary to Western Africa.

For the following account of this gracious visitation we owe warm thanks to the late Rev. B. Browne :—

"Few events in the singularly interesting history of Woodhouse Grove have yielded more precious fruit than the decease of Samuel Sierra Leone Brown. The boys were allowed to take a last look at their dying school-fellow.

"The solemn march of the lads across the playground, their noiseless passage through the bedroom, their tremulous tiptoe tread as they moved around the crib where lay the gasping youth, the gentle word of solemn warning spoken to the deeply affected and astonished lads as they moved in single file past the chair where sat Mr Morley, formed a picture of touching and irrevocable interest. The tidings of Brown's decease was the signal for a universal wail. By his gentleness he had endeared himself. A cloud of sadness rested on the whole

school. All play was by common consent suspended. The school-room became a place of weeping. At this juncture Governor Morley addressed the boys. When the emotional susceptibilities were keenly alive, a valuable opportunity was thus improved. At one time well nigh every boy seemed to be a weeping suppliant at the mercy-seat, seeking the one preparation for death. The five o'clock prayer-meeting, between the afternoon school and supper time, became a favourite institution with a number of the boys. The constancy and hearty devoutness with which Mr B. Gregory, one of the masters, conducted these prayer-meetings, gave them a character for stability and great spiritual advantage. A blessed result appeared in the enrolment of a large number of the boys as members of the Church, and of these several entered the Methodist ministry, among whom I may name J. V. B. Shrewsbury, Jeremiah Shrewsbury, T. Wilde, Theophilus Pearson, T. S. Raby, L. Posnett, J. Posnett, T. S. Gregory, B. Browne and President R. N. Young. Never can we forget the solemn dirge as on an April day, when the buds were unfolding, the hymn, 'The morning flowers display their sweets,' rung out by one hundred juvenile voices, as we bore to their resting-place the wasted form of the departed, and at the close of the service we sang :—

'Thou, in thy youthful prime,
 Hast leaped the bounds of time,
 Suddenly from earth released ;
 Lo ! we now rejoice for thee,
 Taken to an early rest,
 Caught into eternity.'

Closely akin to the genuine revival-spirit is the true missionary spirit. And an invaluable influence brought to bear upon the school by Mr Morley was the infusion amongst the boys of a lively interest in missions.

"Mr Morley's companionship with the earnest and eloquent advocates of negro emancipation and official acquaintance with the terrible wrongs endured by the sons of Ham moved him to set apart August 1st, 1834, as a whole holiday, to be signalled by the most enthusiastic demonstrations. The whole school assembled in the garden, and formed into a circle around the fish-pond, and awoke the echoes of Calverley and Rawdon woods as they sang :—

'Sound the loud timbrel, abroad o'er the sea,
 Jehovah hath triumphed, the negro is free.'

"The public spirit of George Morley has left an indelible stamp in the numerous youths who looked to him as their father. Among the scholars were Jeremiah and John Vincent Brainerd Shrewsbury, born in the West Indies, the worthy sons of a heroic father. South Africa

had its representatives in those who bore the honoured name of Barnabas and William Shaw.

"The visit of the Rev. George Scott to the Grove, 'Sweden Scott'—telling of the wonderful work of grace in Scandinavia, awoke a lively interest in the northern peninsula. As he made known the object of his mission to England: to obtain funds for the erection of a Methodist chapel in Stockholm, it was our joy to commence a subscription which amounted to some twenty-three shillings, contributed by boys who were allowed one penny a week as pocket-money.

"Mr and Mrs Hardy having chosen the lovely valley of the Aire as their place of residence, their accomplished son, Robert Spence Hardy, mingled with the boys, now and then attired in Indian costume. As with turbaned head and a flowing robe of many colours he paced the playground and gathered about him a crowd of juveniles, with rapt attention we were wont to listen to his fascinating description of 'Ceylon's Isle.' Interest in the East was heightened by the appointment of the Rev. Samuel Allen as the superintendent of the Circuit. Recently returned from Ceylon in impaired health, and compelled to support himself with a staff in the pulpit, he was a great favourite with the boys. He greatly aided the boys in forming a museum of missionary curiosities, and lent various idols, Singhalese books, articles of native dress, etc.

"A visit from Kahkewahquonahbi, *the King of the Ostrich feathers*, christened Peter Jones, the Chippeway Indian chief, wearing the singular costume of his tribe and rank, was most interesting.

"The arrival at the school of John Paul and Emile Cook, attired in the dress of French youths, and brought thither by their honoured father, Dr Charles Cook, the famous evangelist of France and Switzerland, tended to abate the national antipathy prevalent towards France half a century ago, and largely shared in by the sons of those whose boyhood had been terrified by the name and threatened invasion of the scourge of Europe. Among the many who mourned the terrible casualty in mid Atlantic which caused the early death of Emile Cook, few felt a keener sadness and sympathy than did his former school-fellows, who have also rejoiced at the position in evangelical Christendom on the Continent and America gained by his elder brother, John Paul, who, when on the missionary deputation in Kent in the autumn of 1884, occupied the pulpit of the French Church in the undercroft of Canterbury Cathedral, and preached to the descendants of those who fled to this country on the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes.

"This combination of influences had its culmination in the Boys' Missionary Meeting. For some previous weeks the literature on missions was eagerly ransacked and voraciously read. The speeches prepared were rehearsed more than once. The dining-tables placed together formed the platforms. Each speaker was duly equipped with a white pocket-handkerchief specially lent for the occasion, and out of his scanty pocket-money each supported his advocacy by the

gift of half-a-crown. With deep interest Governor Morley listened to their youthful effusions, and had the assurance that these juvenile advocates would hereafter sustain the great mission-cause with becoming zeal and intelligence. These lads, grown into men, have, on many a platform, set forth the claims of the Heathen world and moved various congregations to deeds of generosity on its behalf."

During the first six years of Mr Morley's governorship, each of the three United Kingdoms contributed a head-master to Woodhouse Grove School. Mr Parker was a thorough Englishman, Mr Gardiner a true Scot, and the Rev. Joshua Wood, B.A. of Trinity College, Dublin, was an Irishman all over.

And it must be admitted, without at all ignoring the peculiar excellences of the two British Principals, that the Irishman was, "take him for all in all," distinctly the best master of the three. Though a clergyman of the Established Church, he was the son of an eminent Irish Wesleyan minister; he was the son-in-law of another much-respected member of the Irish Conference, and the brother-in-law of a third.

The three consecutive head-masters had little in common, except that they were all "men of stature." Mr Wood was strikingly handsome, with a brilliant complexion, finely-formed features, and a stately presence. In his canonical and academic costume, in which he introduced his charge to the Conference of 1837, he made a most imposing figure. His colloquial English had all the charm and grace of a highly-cultivated Irishman.

It would be gross ingratitude in the present writer to let slip the opportunity of paying an enthusiastic tribute to Mr Wood's rare qualities as the head-master of a large school, having been in close and most delightful and improving contact with him as a pupil, and then as a very young tutor. He was, on the whole, the most fascinating man I ever knew; certainly the best teacher and the most easily-effective disciplinarian. His coming inaugurated a new dispensation at the Grove, fulfilling the old Scotch proverb: "New lords, new laws." First came a clean sweep of the old-world class-books from the upper forms. Fine new editions of the Classics which the higher lads were reading, with eye-resting paper and eye-attracting type, from the then famous Dublin firm of Geoghegan, superseded the discoloured pages and unlovely

typography of the traditional school-books. Then the tiresome old system of incessant parsing and rule-reciting, and wearisome, monotonous going over the same ground again and again, were done away with. It was a continual feast to read with such a teacher a Greek historian straight through; and to read the whole of Horace right on: *Odes*, *Epodes*, *Satires* and *Epistles*, omitting only one book of the *Odes*. For he was a *scholar* in both senses of the word, reading, at the same time, with all the fresh, eager interest of an ever-learner, and with a wealth of annotation, illustration, thought-quickenings and memory-helping anecdote and pleasantry.

Then he introduced the Irish and Continental pronunciation of the Greek and Latin; so much more musical and sonorous than that of our own universities and public schools. He rolled "out Homer's Greek like thunder," *ore rotundo*. He also brought in fresh class-books on English and Sacred history, which went a little below the surface, and were not mere story-books of wars and fightings, and catalogues of kings.

And Mr Wood was equally happy as a "disciplinarian," enforcing obedience and order, yet "without austerity." Keen and quick as was his own intellect, he was most lenient, considerate and compassionate towards natural dullness and slowness of mind. The class system, perforce, bears very hardly upon some boys, whilst it acts as a drag upon others. Mr Wood had little faith in the cane as a magician's wand for detecting latent capacity. It was amusing to hear his expostulations with some little laggard at his lessons: "You unfortunate *homunculus*, why can't you learn that little bit of Latin?" But he would secretly intercede for the dullard with a junior master: "Sure, Mr —, you see he really hasn't got the brains to learn as much as the rest. We must find out how much the unfortunate little fellow can learn, and be satisfied with that." And he was almost as indulgent to natural volatility as to inborn tardiness and congenital incapacity. If a mercurial lad were "sent up to" him for incorrigible inattention or disquiet, he would accost him on this wise: "You little, unfortunate ibex, why can't you sit still, and stick to your work?" "Unfortunate" was his usual epithet in addressing a boy in trouble.

But there was one crime in the punishment of which he had neither moderation nor mercy. This was no other than

the much-lauded school-boy saintship, baptised "muscular Christianity." Fighting aforethought was a disturbance of the peace which he could not tolerate. Usually his moral machinery seemed so exquisitely constructed or adjusted that his self-control always rose in proportion to his indignation. We have seen him flush with honest anger on the discovery of deliberate deception or other meanness, and heard him exclaim with true Hibernian inconsequence: "Ah! sure now, *and if I weren't in a passion, I'd cut you within an inch o' your life.*"

Mr Wood seized every opportunity of exciting in his pupils a *love* of learning. And he strove to cultivate their sensibilities as well as their intellectual powers. He would not hesitate to interrupt the regular class-work for either the one purpose or the other. Thus he read to the whole school Sir Robert Peel's noble address to a Scotch University on his election to the Rectorship. Although he had a strong prejudice against Americans, yet when Dr Wilbur Fisk visited the school and addressed the boys, Mr Wood gave warm expression to his enthusiastic admiration of the exquisite thought and language of that most refined speaker: "Ah, then!" he exclaimed, "isn't that an *elegant* man, now?" He would bring into the school a little wandering Italian organ-boy, and let him wind off his scanty stock of tunes, and make his heart dance by the reward he gave him.

His initial and instinctive sentiment towards his pupils and his young colleagues was that of confidence and affection. His whole tone and bearing seemed to say: "You and I shall get on together admirably, I can see." If ever he were momentarily at a loss for a Greek or Latin word, he would not hesitate to ask his scholars to supply him with it. "What's this it is, at all—the *Greek* for a *top*?" This frank and easy bearing conjoined with his Hibernian modes of expression gave an added interest to his teaching. Some of the latter were very peculiar: for example, his substitution of a preposition and a demonstrative pronoun for an adverb of place, always needing and always accompanied by animated gesture: "Who brought that *into this*? Take *this* out o' *that*?"

But it was as "a superior disciplinarian, enforcing obedience and order without austerity," and as a helpful, sympathetic teacher, that Mr Wood was chiefly respected and beloved by lesson-learning, law-abiding lads.

[The narrative now takes up "my spontaneous self-culture, and my spiritual history" from the beginning of the Grove days.] Though my literary longing was intense, my whole library consisted of one bound volume of *The Child's Companion*, the humble predecessor of our present *Early Days*. This I already knew almost by heart, its most attractive contents being Eliza W. Bradburn's *Knight of the Red Cross*, a juvenile rendering of Spenser's *Faerie Queen*, and *Adventures in Bible Lands*. I was literally a boy "of one book."

One of my gravest misgivings was connected with food for the famine of my fancy. But the indulgent forethought of my Heavenly Father was "better to me than all my doubts and fears." By far the most literary lad of that time was Joseph Gostick, brother of the late eloquent John Gostick, and uncle of the present eloquent Rev. J. C. W. Gostick. He had already achieved a connexional celebrity by his contributions to the *Youth's Instructor*, and was for half a century, from 1839 to 1889, a voluminous and distinguished writer. It so occurred that during the summer of 1829, Gostick's invalid sister, being recommended change of air, spent six weeks at our house. On my arrival at the Grove, Gostick, my senior by five years, came to me and said: "My sister has written to tell *me* that you are a ravenous reader, and she has given me charge to see that you don't 'want for books or for somebody to talk with about them.'" My heart leaped up when I heard that; for I had asked with reverence: "Which is Joseph Gostick?" and he was universally regarded as a prodigy. His companionship and patronage were splendid facts for me; for it introduced me to "the reading set" of which he and Dr Rigg's brother were the authorities. He at once took me into his confidence. He was full of literary projects and ambitions, and had already planned a poem on the scale of Young's *Night Thoughts*, the "argument" of which and many of the passages he read to me from time to time.

Another most felicitous circumstance for me was the fact that Thomas Pearson, whose widowed mother lived at Patrington, and with whom I had consorted during his vacation, was the Librarian. Now only the upper fifty of the hundred boys were allowed access to the library, or entrusted with its volumes. But Tom Pearson came quietly to me, and said: "The librarian's perquisite is to have two volumes out at a

time ; so you shall always have one of them ; and if any lad asks you what right you have to a library book, just say : ‘ This is one of Tom Pearson’s books, and he’s letting me have a look at it.’ ” This arrangement settled on me the “ passing rich ” allowance of at least one volume a week.

The library was not an ill-assorted collection, although to a great extent a stud of “ gift-horses,” and therefore not to be “ looked in the mouth ” to ascertain their age. It contained no fiction. But there was good store of solid, useful entertainment for a hungry, healthy, hearty, growing little mind. Amongst the most memorable were three many-volumed works which have since dropped completely from the public view : Mavor’s *Universal History* ; Condor’s *Modern Traveller* ; and a charming repertory called : *Wonders of Nature and Art*. All these contained a vast amount of literary pemmican, well-pounded and well-packed, not dried to hardness, and sufficiently seasoned to be palatable, and not destitute of “ officinal properties.” Amongst the *Wonders of Nature* dwelt upon was the handsome *Tulip-tree* in the garden of Woodhouse Grove, with the strange beauty of its leaf-bud and its large and graceful flowers, yellow, green and orange ; at the date of the book one of the only two specimens in England. Then we had portable editions of Cook’s *Voyages* ; Robertson’s *History of Scotland* ; of *America* ; and of *Charles V.*, the second being by far the most delightful, in my judgment—not so “ humble ” then as it is now. As to the last-named, it took me the whole six years —“ off and on,” of course—to master the first volume, embodying his elaborate *View of the Progress of Society from the Subversion of the Roman Empire to the Beginning of the Sixteenth Century* : one of the toughest bits of reading I ever undertook, by reason of its stiffness of style and its monotonous cadence, and the utter absence of the historic fancy. Then we had such books as Bryant’s *Analysis of Ancient Mythology* ; and Claudius Buchanan’s *Christian Researches in Asia* ; all the books interesting to young people published by the Book Room, such as Watson’s *Conversations for the Young* : a charming presentation of the literary beauties of the Bible ; Hill’s *Miniature Portraits* ; or, *Brief Biography, displaying a Selection of Eminent Characters* : a highly stimulating book, which exerted a powerful influence on my imagination and my heart. It is a pity that William Hill should be known only as the author

of the *Alphabetical Arrangement of Wesleyan - Methodist-Preachers*. Also Hughes' *Horæ Britannicæ: Studies in Ancient British History*: a work of real merit and deep interest; Kay's *Travels and Researches in Kaffraria*; Reynolds' *Anecdotes of Wesley* (I think the most popular book in the library); Sleigh's *Practical Dictionary: Containing concise yet comprehensive Schemes of the most necessary Subjects, Divine, Moral and Literary*; Stanley's *Popery Indefensible*; John Stephenson's (father of Dr Bowman Stephenson) *Sacred History*; Thomas Stephenson's (father of several ministers), *Miniature Portrait of Methodism*; *The Mosaic Creation of the World, illustrated by Discourses and Experiments*, by the Rev. Thomas Wood, M.A.: a very remarkable book, considering the date of its publication, 1818. It was well abreast of the science of the time. We had also Beal's *Lectures on Geology and Geognosy*; and Sutcliffe's *Refutation of Prominent Errors in the Wemerian System of Geology*, etc., and his *Geology of the Avon*.

Of course we had several standard English Classics, such as the *Spectator* and Hume's *History of England*. I found Thomas Wood's book vastly more alluring than the far more famous works then so popular and so commended: Derham's *Physico-theology* and *Astro-theology*; Ray's *Wisdom of God in Creation*; and Sturm's *Reflections*. No doubt my preference for Wood's volume was partly due to the superiority of its paper and type: a matter of at least as much importance to the young as to adults. Amongst the most interesting books in the library was Dr Enoch Wood's *Account of the Pirates Executed at St Christopher's*. Of travels there was nothing to compete with Mungo Park's *Interior of Africa*, and Bruce's *Abyssinia*. Of biographies those which impressed me most were the *Lives of Colonel Gardiner* and *Colonel Blackader*, a brave and devout soldier of the Gardiner type; and the life of young Durant by his father, the Congregationalist minister of Poole—a very stimulating book. Amongst the books which cast the strongest fascination on my fancy were: *The Travels of Cyrus*; and *The Travels of Young Anacharsis*. These books were at that time deservedly popular; each had, to my mind, all the charm of an antique philosophic romance, far surpassing Johnson's *Rasselas*, with its stilted style, its soporific cadences, and its tedious moralising—always excepting the picture of

the happy valley ; and Fénelon's *Telemachus*, for the like reason, I found very tiresome. I waded through Watts *On the Improvement of the Mind*, but derived from it little good, excepting from the Rules for strengthening of the Memory ; Locke on *Education* I found much more interesting and instructive.

I must echo Joseph Gostick's "especially the *Eclectic*," as giving that then splendid *Review* the foremost place "amongst the books belonging to the school library." It was under the consummate editorship of Josiah Conder ; and reckoned amongst its patrons and contributors such men as Southey, Montgomery, John Foster, and Robert Hall ; the editor himself being a true poet, a literary expert, and a sound critic.

From the first, nearly all my schoolfellows were most generous in lending me books. J. G. Towers, my fellow-voyager from Yarmouth to Hull on what was to both our first sea-trip, let me read several volumes of thrilling narratives of voyages, including *The Mutiny of the "Bounty,"* and the earlier Arctic explorations. But the favourite books of this kind, read by most of us with avidity and frequency, were two bulky quartos : *Anson's Voyages*, and *All the Voyages Round the World*. These two volumes conspired with *Robinson Crusoe* to enkindle and sustain a passion for an adventurous seafaring life. A book of *Trades* I devoured with almost as much interest as any book of Battles or of Travels ; and I was proud to have already seen seven of the most famous places in an illustrated *Book of Towns* : York, Norwich, Yarmouth, Hull, Nottingham, Sheffield, Leeds. To a two-volumed folio, Buffon's *Natural History*, profusely illustrated, I owed one of the longest and most fruitful friendships of my life. This book belonged to William Sugden, who was destined to be well known and widely influential as the Teacher of Method in Teaching for so many years at our Westminster Normal Training College.

I found amongst my school-fellows three chief caterers of books. The first was Henshaw, whom I looked upon with reverence as the nephew of the great Richard Watson. The link between us was twofold. Henshaw had a copy of Pope's *Homer*, which he delighted in reading along with a lad who was quite as much interested in it as he himself. We spent many an hour in discussing the heroes and fighting the battles over

again. He had also the richest collection of comic and pathetic poetry I have ever seen ; the pieces being anonymous, and with the exception of Dibdin's *Sea-Songs*, so far as I know, nowhere else to be found. This, doubtless, as well as other anthologies, sacred and secular, determined my answer to a question put to me by a school-fellow, which betrayed the crudeness of my bibliography and literary taste when nine years old : " Who's your favourite poet ? " " Well, I hardly know ; sometimes I think Cowper, and sometimes *Anon.*" I had not yet found out that "*Anon.*," one of the largest producers of " fugitive " verse, was, like the *Isaiah* of " the Higher Criticism," a noun of multitude.

Henshaw's father had, for a Methodist minister, a library marvellously rich in general literature. Henshaw brought back with him after the vacation a superb contingent from his father's library. Amongst these we were most " taken up with " Hoole's translation of Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso* ; Camoens' *Lusiad*, in Mickle's spirited translation ; James' *Naval History of Great Britain* ; an exquisite selection of most graceful classic poetry, which well sustained its title of *Calliope* ; and a little book setting forth the advantages, as a sea-side residence and health-resort, of a fishing village, named *Southport*, in which his father was about to settle as a Supernumerary.

Another eminent minister whose library was made accessible to me by the kindness of a school-fellow, was that of the widely-read and accomplished Isaac Keeling. William, his eldest son, I could never bribe, by any show of coppers, to lend me any one of his father's carefully kept books, for fear of my soiling or otherwise harming them. But Robert Keeling, on returning after the vacation which followed his brother's leaving school, brought to me a splendid lot of books, to which I could otherwise have had no access. Among those which most impressed me were : Sir Robert Ker Porter's *Account of Napoleon's Russian Campaign*, and his *Travels in Georgia, Persia and Armenia* ; Jane Porter's *Scottish Chiefs* ; Earl Macartney's *Journal of the Embassy to China* ; and a costly collection of the most charming Tales and Essays.

Charles Anderson, son of the most brilliant Methodist orator of the time, brought me a fine copy of *Hudibras*, and Dryden's translations of Virgil and Ovid ; but as his father was exactingly neat as to books as well as dress, and I

had been so intent on the contents of Hudibras as to be neglectful of its exterior, Anderson was obliged to deny me the other volumes. But his "crib" happened to be close to mine; I had observed him hiding the books at the foot of his bed, and he was a very heavy sleeper. As I, in summer time, always had a good hour's reading before a quarter-past five A.M., when the bell rang, I managed to read every line of his books, replacing the volume at the first stroke of the bell. So these streams of classic song took all the added sweetness of "stolen waters." I always slept with a book under my pillow, that I might buy up every available moment. One night the Governor woke us up to behold a magnificent spectacle, of which the ten-crib room where I slept commanded the finest view. The great Rawdon factory was burnt to ashes; and as it stood upon the summit of a hill, and contained large quantities of oil, it flamed like a mock Vesuvius. Though considerably more than a mile off, I read with ease as I lay in bed, by the light of the fire, a small-print volume taken from under my pillow.

James Smetham, the artist-poet, to whose genius Rosetti gives such enthusiastic testimony as the Blake of the nineteenth century, made me a present of several valuable works: such as *Ossian's Poems*; Falconer's *Shipwreck*; some volumes of *Elegant Extracts*, a rich repertory of the choicest passages from the finest English writers; and *Six Months near Rome*.

I devoured school-books which did not come within the Grove curriculum. My sisters lent me their *Magnall's Questions*, the book which was Maurice's pet aversion. It is now, I think with justice, almost discarded as a *school-book*, being little better than a scrap-heap of general information, without proportion or sensible arrangement. Nevertheless, I read it many times from end to end, and not without advantage. Governor Morley was fond of questioning the whole school thus: "I will give any boy a penny who will tell me so-and-so." He never put a question which I did not answer. One day he said: "I will give any boy a shilling who will tell me who was the father of the sons of Zeruiah." "Zeruiah," echoed the lads, thinking it a catch, like "Who was the father of Zebedee's children?" Now it so happened that at this time I was deep in *Josephus*, and disconcerted the Governor by solving the problem by the aid of his *Jewish Antiquities*.

But what was my soul-state during these four years of vivid mental life? Harriet Beecher Stowe, at the age of sixteen, writes to her brother: "You speak of your predilections for literature having been a snare to you. I have found it so myself. I can scarcely think without tears and indignation that all that is beautiful, lovely and poetical has been laid on other altars." Alas! the experience of the Congregationalist pastor's daughter befell also the Methodist minister's son. The literary fever did eat into the heart of my spiritual constitution. I became vain in my "imagination," and my "foolish heart was darkened." Surely I "walked in a vain show" of heathenish and worldly phantasy. The God-fearing Grove lad fell into a lower state than that of the Epworth rector's son at the Charter-House.

"In darkness willingly I strayed,
I sought Thee, yet from Thee I roved,
Far wide my wandering thoughts were spread,
Thy creatures more than Thee I loved."

CHAPTER V

A SCHOOLBOY'S RELIGION

THE way in which I lost wholly, for a time, the bright religion of my childhood was through other interests, ideas and images gradually gaining possession of my imagination and affection. It must be premised that the period I am now dealing with was that from eight to twelve years old. First came the *Classic* interest, at that time wholly through translations, except the excerpts from Lucian, Moschus, Bion, and Anacreon in the *Analecta Græca Minora*, which cast a potent spell upon my fancy. I gained considerable popularity with my school-fellows by composing an imitation of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, entitled: *The Transformation of Needham and his wife into Pillars*. The gates of one of the entrances to the playground from the outer world were hung on stone pillars, each surmounted by a huge stone-globe, christened playfully *Needham's Head*, in compliment to Robert Needham, a bullet-headed boy, afterwards well known throughout the Connexion as printer of the Hymn-Book, and many other Book-Room publications. One of the two pillars came to be designated Mrs Needham. My metrical account of the metamorphosis copied by some of the lads and shown amongst their friends won me an extra-academic notoriety. I read Lemprière's *Classical Dictionary* straight through on my own account, mastering the substance of every article of interest. My fancy thus became completely hellenised and therefore heathenised.

Another encroaching and usurping force was the *romantic* element, represented strongly by the lyrics and the love-lays of Goldsmith, Prior, Pope and others; by Ariosto's marvellously brilliant *Orlando Furioso*, and the still more wonderful creation of his English disciple, Spenser's *Faerie Queene*. At the Grove all fiction was a thing forbid, excepting *Henry, Earl of Moreland*, the Tales of Mrs Sherwood, Mrs Hoffland, and Jane Porter, and a capital Scotch story, *The Cottagers of Glenburnie*,

by Mrs Hamilton. Now my nine co-occupants of the snug "ten-crib room" were genuine school-boys: they had enough of books in school-hours, and could not have too much play in playtime; yet they were very fond of interesting narrative and amusing or affecting recitation, without the tedium of reading. So when the prohibition to talk in the bedroom was relaxed, I was elected by acclamation to the proud office of purveyor of Grove-night's Entertainments, and spent, on the average, an hour every night in retailing the reading of the day, or drawing on my treasures of anecdote, incident, adventure, achievement, romance or comedy. When my storehouse was exhausted, an Egyptian burden was imposed. To the confession: "I've told you every tale I know," the relentless answer was: "*Then hatch one up!*" As I had next to no knowledge of life or of society, my only possible resource was to make "new combinations": to break up all the tales I knew and put the gaudy fragments into a rude kaleidoscope and amuse my unexacting audience as best I could.

But this, in conjunction with the smallness of my library, had one very serviceable effect: it stimulated me to efforts of memory which I should otherwise have never made. As almost every book I read must be returned shortly, and as I could not afford to keep a commonplace-book, I was compelled to learn by rote every poem or passage which I could not bear to lose; the result being an exceptional retentiveness of memory, of incalculable use to me in after life. Anxious to keep up my reputation, and to compensate for my pitiable, yet laughable inefficiency on the playground, I spent my first four vacations—1830-33,—for the most part, in *cramming* with a kind of literature not accessible at school: popular novels and song-books, entertaining periodicals and poetical works; such as the poems of Robert Burns, which were contraband at "the Wesleyan-Methodist academy." Boy-companionship I had none, except the most incidental and intermittent. All the weekly schoolpence I could save, and an occasional shilling from a well-to-do farmer, a relative, or sixpence from my father's hosts when I accompanied him to his appointments—were all invested in the three circulating libraries of which Belper could at that time boast. The staple commodity was tales; and those, alas! of not the highest order. There was not one of Sir Walter Scott's, nor even one of the great Derbyshire moralising

novelist, Richardson. They were all of the sensational and sentimental class ; such as : *The Farmer's Daughter of Essex* ; *The Gipsy Countess* ; and *The Cottage on the Cliff*. There was but one three-volumed romance of real historic value : a vivid narration of the exploits of Essex in Ireland. The recollection of this story gave added interest to many a scene in that romantic island on my visits to it in later life. But the work that served my purpose best was a periodical named *The Mirror* : a splendid publication of its kind. Of this I read several bound volumes. It was replete with natural humour, and, except in the Essay Department, was a worthy predecessor to Chambers' *Edinburgh Journal*. Alike its tragic and its comic stories—such as *The Dead Shot*, and *The Doctrine of Signs*—and its breezy nautical tales, were immense favourites in “the ten-crib room,” not only at that time, but in after years also, when, as “Master” in charge of that cosy bedroom, I rehearsed them to a later auditory. I also got hold of Pope's *Windsor Forest*, and his poetical essays ; the epigrammatic brilliance of which had a great charm.

Then there were other interests which competed, not without success, for my attention, affection and ambition. My second prize was *Tom Telescope*, put into my hands by the scientific Philip Garrett, with a most animated and animating exhortation to master every line of it for myself. There were not a few popular juvenile publications afloat about the school ; such as : *Wonders of the Microscope* ; *Curiosities for the Ingenious* ; and, above all, Joyce's *Scientific Dialogues*. Moreover, Frankland lent me Lord Worcester's *Century of Inventions*, as well as the book which, next to *The Mirror*, formed my principal stock-in-trade as a retail dealer in anecdote and incident : *A thousand Notable Things*.

Mr Parker's answer to the question “What is Time ?”¹ opened to me the great subject which in after years I found to be the main object of ontological investigation : the *relativity* of human perceptions and impressions, and their not essential, but only practical certainty. Everything in our school-books which displayed the slightest subtlety of thought acted on me with an arresting fascination, and set my mind *upon the work* ; as, for example, the rule in Lindley Murray's Grammar : “A noun of multitude” requires a verb in the singular or in

¹ See p. 97.

the plural according to "the unity or plurality of idea" which it conveys: as "Parliament *is* dissolved; the people *are* clamorous."

The last quoted "example" reminds me of another dissipating excitement which supervened upon the rest: the *political enthusiasm*. In those days every street-boy, if not every school-boy, was a flaming partisan. Catholic Emancipation in 1829 was immediately followed by the motion for Parliamentary Reform, the death of George IV., the accession of William IV., the establishment of the unpopular new police, the fall of the Duke of Wellington's administration, the appointment to the Home Office of the Derbyshire Lord Melbourne, the introduction to the Cabinet of the Duke of Devonshire—the chief proprietor of Belper, whose territorial title should have been, the Duke of Derbyshire. The spirit of popular insurrection was enkindled by the French Revolution of 1830. Violence and outrage began in Derbyshire and spread thence to Nottinghamshire, culminating in the riotous destruction by fire of Nottingham Castle. This was followed by the reduction to ashes of a large part of Bristol by the mob, with great loss of life. Governor Morley read to us from the newspapers the minutest details of these riots, and of the execution of the leading rioters. Illegal and threatening political unions were formed: a mass-meeting of these at Birmingham was said to number a hundred and fifty thousand. Seditious songs were printed without printers' names, and sung and sold in Belper streets; the penalty of the latter crime being supposed to be evaded by selling a straw for a halfpenny, and making the purchaser a present of the song. Some of these ditties directly incited to organised insurrection; others were the vehicles of rude though racy satire against the King, the Queen, and the Duke of Wellington. All these I learnt by heart in order to retail them in "the ten-crib room" and on the playground. One of them began:—

"The Union coach rolls on the road;
Indeed, I am no railer;
For on the box we've set to drive
One Billy King, a sailor."

The tract of country then included within the Belper Circuit had been for twenty years, from the days of the

Luddites, a focus of popular discontent and the headquarters of organised conspiracy. One of three men executed at Derby for high treason had been the ablest local preacher in the Circuit. A near relative of the two principal Methodist families in Belper, as well as a relative of another highly respectable family with which I became familiar, had been at the same time and for implication in the same offence condemned to penal servitude. I was on the best terms with the two leading politicians of the place. These were the republican freethinker, who kept the principal circulating library, whose leisurely business made him very communicative with his customers on current and recent politics, and Mr Palmer, at once the most popular local preacher and the most effective street orator of the district. The favourite street song of young Belper was :—

“ The Levelution is begun,
 So I'll go home and get my gun,
 And shoot the Duke of Wellington.”

The excitement was greatly aggravated by a most mistaken act of popular legislation in 1830 : the remission of the beer duty, estimated at £3,000,000, and the throwing open of the beer-trade. At a minimum of ratability any one could obtain a license without any application to the magistrates. The result was an immediate and immense multiplication of public-houses. One could not walk many hundred yards without seeing the suggestive announcement flaring in one's face : *Licensed to sell beer : To be drunk on the premises*. Highly-drugged and thirst-inflaming stuff was “ swilled ” to a sometimes maddening excess. Hence a portentous increase of brutality, vice and crime. I have seen men, after a drinking-bout, turn out into Belper Street for a *kicking-match*, most hideous to behold, more fit for Borneo than Britain. Thus national affairs were discussed by men at once “ drugged ” and “ drunk.”

Nowhere were the celebrations at the passing of the Reform Bill more enthusiastic or more picturesque than in the thriving little town on the banks of Derwent. The Strutts, the great employers of the population, indeed the makers of modern Belper, and since ennobled under that title, celebrated the event in right royal fashion. They gave to every cottager

in the town "a good piece of flesh"—a pound for every one of a meat-eating age; and if not "a cake of grapes," yet its English equivalent, a pound of plum-pudding. And as the "Supernumerary" clearly came within the category of cottager, we said grace over six pounds of rich plum-pudding and of boneless beef—the only "butcher's meat" I ever saw in our own house during my first three vacations. I myself spent three precious pennies on a red band, with the word *Reform* in gilt letters, to grace my leather cap as I took part in the triumphal procession through the main streets of the town: "trumpets sounding, drums beating, flags flying."

My father's reticence with regard to politics was remarkable in a man of such earnest thought, and of sympathies so wide and warm. I can only account for this by his intense preoccupation with theological truth and spiritual fact, and the pastoral prudence which characterised the Methodist ministers of half a century ago.

One more interest which in its fascination warred against my soul remains to be described. Soon after Governor Morley's arrival three itinerant elocutionists, a father and two sons, delivered at the Grove a splendid lecture, with masterly illustrations of the art. The most striking pieces were the quarrel between Brutus and Cassius; *Alexander and the Robber*, from *Evenings at Home*; scenes from *The Merchant of Venice*; and the *Irish Hedge-schoolmaster*. This exhibition set some of us aflame. We were allowed to reproduce the two first-named pieces in the dining-room on winter Saturday evenings, and then to enact the principal passages in *The Merchant of Venice*. "The family" and visitors patronised these performances. There was no dressing-up, except that the lad Shylock robbed a cow's tail for a beard, and borrowed an old top-coat for a "gaberline."

That the effect of this exhibition was, at the time and in the main, healthy and educative there can be little doubt. By a pleasant and improving occupation it kept out of mischief many an eager restless lad who would otherwise have been roasting stolen potatoes in "the furnace," pillaging the bakehouse, or in search of adventures at the riverside, in the grove or at the bridge. Things having worked so well so far, the lads were allowed to try their hand at a Classic play: *Julius Cæsar*. To me was assigned the unenviable part of being

torn to pieces by the mob, as the poet Cinna, "for his bad verses." But I escaped this fate through the discovery made by the masters that the players had taken advantage of the privilege to use for rehearsal the top classical room, where the lectures on chemistry were given, to act another play: Dr E. Young's powerful tragedy, *Revenge*; and that one of us was wont to deck himself in female attire. This put an end to the whole affair.

I had no talent for tragic acting; but a flexibility of my facial muscles, an intense interest in individual and provincial peculiarities, and a consequent power of precipitating myself into the personality of another, made me an entertaining mimic and rehearser of provincial tales and songs; such as *The Oldham Recruit*, a piece of roaring fun, with which I used to convulse my comrades as I stood upon a bench in the playground. From reading the Lives and Works of Goldsmith and some other poets, I became entirely possessed by a passionate ambition to be a comedian and a literary man about town; and I devoted myself to preparation for this career. My indulgence in satiric mimicry was so excessive that, on this account alone, I was, with one exception, the best flogged lad of the year 1832-3, by the masters; and, without exception, the worst-kicked lad by my school-fellows.

It may well be asked: How did you find time to read so many books? This is easily explained. Our school-lessons were never very exacting to a lad of average powers of acquisition; and I had always a wide rim for the indulgence, in school-hours, of my personal proclivities. We had no summer night-school, and the lesson of the winter night-school never took me more than a quarter of an hour of the hour and a half allowed for it. The two masters in charge were usually too intent upon their own studies to trouble themselves about a boy who did nothing to attract attention. Thus I was always able to "*sneak*" a book, as the phrase was, between me and my lesson-book. That gave me an hour and a quarter every winter evening, as well as odd intervals during the morning and afternoon sessions. Then in summer time I always had a good hour's reading in bed before the bell rang for rising. Besides, as we were not permitted to speak at meals we were allowed to read: a privilege to which I "lived up." At least three-fourths of my play-time was devoted to

books. During the holidays reading was my vocation and my pastime.

The effect which all this had upon my spiritual life is but too easily described. I gradually lost all interest in "the things that are not seen," but "eternal." I began by shortening, more and more, my daily portion of Bible-reading till it was whittled down to one verse, and then neglected, at first occasionally, and afterwards altogether. At that time there were no facilities at the Grove for private prayer, but for three years I kept up my morning and evening minute at my bedside. One Sunday evening, when I had been hearing my father preach at Shottle, a gentleman gave me sixpence, which next morning I was so eager to turn into a song-book, that I *postponed* my bedside collect till I had secured my prize. This turned out to be the most worthless stuff imaginable. My mortification at this *chouse* was such that I could not but regard it, in Grove parlance, "a lad-judgment" for having put off my morning worship. But, by-and-bye, I knelt at command and rose at signal, like a camel or a spaniel, without whispering a word of prayer.

At one time my impiety took a strangely heathen shape. The "portions" of bread dealt out for supper and breakfast had a sufficient range of scantiness to make the distribution a matter of hope and fear, of self-gratulation or of envy. When I was getting remiss in my devotions, I tried to bargain with my Heavenly Father that if He would regularly secure for me one of the larger portions I would resume my chapter-reading, and be more earnest in my bedside prayer. I had formed some Tyndallian theory of "testing the *quantitative* power of prayer." But the very next supper-time the smallest portion fell to my lot that I had ever seen dealt out; so small as to make the master hesitate to give it; but as there were but a hundred pieces for a hundred mouths, he evidently felt that I might as well be the sufferer as any of my fellows. I took this, indeed, as a direct and most marked answer to prayer, but as a distinct and express rebuff.

It must not be supposed that I ever sank into a state of spiritual insensibility. Far from it: my Christian teaching, training, convictions and experience had been too real and strong to allow of that. I know not how to describe my religious condition, but as a falling back from the Eighth of

Romans to the Seventh. That, for some time, I had lived in the Eighth of Romans is certain. Its blue heaven had stretched above me, I had breathed its balmy atmosphere, its cheery sunlight had played upon me and around me, and had beautified my present, and lit up the whole perspective of a future full of interest and of hope. Assuredly, I had "entered the kingdom of heaven as a little child." I enjoyed "the Spirit of Adoption, whereby" I cried: "Abba, Father!" and that with a clearness, a closeness and a confidence, a tenderness and joy, more like that which I felt towards my mother than that which my earthly father had inspired.

I can see but one way of accounting for my fall: "the serpent beguiled me." Right "in the midst of the garden" stood "the tree of the knowledge of good and evil"; and it seemed to me "a tree to be desired *to make one wise*." But I was not let alone. "The commandment *came*": it came with O what vividness and force! It *came* like some august and potent personality. It strode across my wayward path like an authoritative angel, brandishing a flaming sword. "And when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died. . . . For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, beguiled me, and by it slew me." "Sin, taking occasion, wrought in me through the commandment all manner of passionate hankering after" denied or contraband enjoyments. It awoke in me

"The hunger and thirst of the heart,
The fever and fire of the brain,
That grasps at the fruitage forbidden,
The golden pomegranates of Eden,
To quiet its throbbing and pain."

I was shocked to find, in reading *Paradise Lost*, that my lurking sympathies were all with Satan and his cause. No doubt this was partly owing to a congenital and instinctive volunteering on the weaker and the losing side, which always made a Trojan of me. But still, the feeling had in it a rebellious element.

Yet, all this time, I was cherishing a high-toned sentimentalism, and a not ignoble sensibility. This, at least, I had gained from what was called "polite literature"; and from the instructions and the influence of my mother and my sisters. The pinching penury of a Supernumerary's household, when as

yet there was no Auxiliary Fund, had enriched me with a kindly fellow-feeling for the poor. I also cultivated a high sense of school-boy honour. I remember well the penetrating self-disgust which seized me when, in an intellectual competition, I took an unfair advantage of a school-fellow. I gained also from Greek and Roman writers an intense admiration and eager emulation of what may be called *the public and social virtues*: such as patriotism and fidelity in friendship. I was more familiar with and more fond of Aristides, Epaminondas, Pelopidas, Philopœmen, Æmilius Paulus, Scipio, Lucullus and the rest, than with Joshua, David, or Judas Maccabæus.

Again, though my spiritual sensibilities had become like ice "hardened after thaw"; yet there was still within me a deep strong undercurrent of conviction and susceptibility to religious influence. Powerful preaching was sure to affect me greatly *at the time*. Some discourses I well remember still. The earliest was preached by the then famous Daniel Isaac, from: "I love them that love Me; and those that seek Me early shall find Me." No doubt the appeals made all the deeper impresson because I had received attentions from the stern old preacher. I had been his guest in Leeds on my way to school, and on Committee days his quaint, farmer-like figure, in blue coat and waistcoat and drab small-clothes, would saunter into the playground and enter into curt colloquy with any lad who cared to claim or make acquaintance with him. This merciless assailant of "Ecclesiastical Claims" had an undisguised partiality for a long "churchwarden pipe," which invariably accompanied him in his strolls of inspection of our half-holiday sports. I liked to sidle up to him, and be asked about my father, with whom he had formed a friendship in the days of their probation. There was a gruff kindness in his gnarled and knotty nature. His face was a pronounced Hebraism, and its expression solemnly Semitic; yet his peculiarities gave an archaic interest and impressiveness to a severely simple personality. Strange to say, the most telling part of his appeal, on this particular occasion, was its grim humour, enforced with irresistible grimace. In exposing the untrustworthiness of a death-bed repentance, he asked us what plea for pardon and eternal happiness the gasping penitent could offer. "What can the man say, but"—lifting upwards

a gruesome and lugubrious face : “ O Lord, if Thou wilt graciously pardon all my sins, and take me straight to heaven only for the sake of Christ, *I'll be very much obliged to Thee.*” I confess that, in a succession of critical illnesses, I have felt reduced to the like abjection. Nevertheless, at the time, this unevangelic sarcasm produced on me at least a salutary effect.

A later sermon which also powerfully affected me was in a very different style, and by a very different man. The preacher was John Anderson, father-in-law of the Rev. John Hartley, and grandfather of well-known Wesleyan Methodist ministers. Next to Lessey, he was the most irresistibly eloquent Methodist preacher of the time. The text was : “ The God before Whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac did walk, the God which hath fed me all my life long unto this day, the Angel which hath redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads ; and let my name be named on them, and the name of my fathers Abraham and Isaac.” Anderson had the true temperament of an orator. He was “ tremblingly alive all o'er ” with the most vivid sensibility. His look and bearing could not but awake the highest expectation. And the whole service was *of a piece*. With a magnificent *momentum* he gave out the hymn :—

“ Captain of our salvation, take
 The souls we here present to Thee,
 And fit for Thy great service make
 These heirs of immortality ;
 And let them in Thine image rise,
 And then transplant to Paradise.”

His tones and cadences brought out the glorious rhythm of the lines. His own lads were before him, and every sentence seemed to throb with the pulsations of a father's heart. The relation of the hymns and prayer to the sermon was that of a cannonade to an assault. The glowing language and the impassioned delivery of his final appeal to our filial loyalty to Methodism was simply overwhelming.

Another sermon very powerfully affected me. The text was : “ It is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth.” The preacher was the Rev. Robert Pilter, father of the Rev. J. M. Pilter and of Thomas Pilter, Chevalier of the Legion of Honour ; both Grove lads. Mr Pilter's preaching told upon me all the more on account of the warm and active

sympathy which he had shown to my father and our family, visiting us in our cottage at Belper. Mr Pilster's pulpit power was then at its perfection ; and his commanding presence and his massive build gave full effect to the manly sense and the animated gravity of his discourse. Amongst his brethren he was the most hilarious and facetious minister I ever knew ; but in the pulpit, especially in appealing to and for the young, his tenderness was irresistible.

A hair-breadth escape from instant death also aroused me for a little while. It was the first of our annual excursions to "the Chevin," which Wesley describes as the "high mountain near Otley." It certainly commands one of the finest views in England : the vast plain of York, and the grand mass of the historic minster, and the lovely sweep of Wharfedale. As we reached the crest from behind by a long and gradual ascent, the superb prospect burst upon us in a moment, and literally almost knocked me down. Our outdoor dinner finished we were allowed to skip about at will, like the wild goats on the hills. It was bilberry-time, and as I had never before tasted or seen the luscious, dark blue fruit, I found it engrossingly interesting in more than one respect. Nearly all the rest of the lads had moved off to another part of the mountain for a general romp ; but I was browsing so intently and so eagerly as to be completely buried in a bilberry bush. I had just plucked the last berry and lifted up my head, when I saw a mass of rock come bounding down the hill, and had barely time to fling myself out of its way. Had I stayed another second I should have been crushed out of all possibility of recognition, and could only have been identified by inference. For the fragment fell with terrific impact just where I had lain. Forthwith, Sam Waterhouse, "the boy Shylock," came running to me, as white as death, and cried : "O, Ben, I never saw you there ; I thought no one was in the way !" Always on the look-out for some eccentric mischief, he had noticed an impending piece of rock, like the loose tooth of a monster, which he thought he could dislodge by main force, and should like to see careering down the mountain side. So, thinking that the coast was clear, the mischievous young Ajax had pushed it off its centre. Startled and aghast as I was, I could not help watching with intensest interest the progress of the mass, which dashed along the steep declivity with enormous bounds,

“thundered impetuous down,” and made a huge breach in a stone wall at the bottom of the hill, and then ploughed its way into the middle of a corn-field. Alas ! the religious earnestness aroused by this so marked deliverance proved ephemeral.

Even in this state of spiritual apathy, I was incidentally adding to my knowledge of theology. In those days the steel pen, a new and unperfected invention, was not yet introduced to public schools. The making and mending of pens for a hundred boys was a rather tedious undertaking. This duty was assigned to the third master, Mr Chettle. Now, at this time, he was preparing for the ministry, and was consequently deep in Divinity, and eagerly buying up every available moment for the prosecution of his studies. The mechanical use of the penknife left his mind free for the importation of knowledge through Bunyan’s “Eargate,” though Eyegate was preoccupied. To my great elation, and no doubt inflation, Mr Chettle installed me into the office of theological reader to his proximate Reverence. I do not think that any one of my school-fellows begrudged me the appointment. A few years later the not yet Rev. Dr R. Newton Young performed the same office to myself, and hence playfully claimed to be my first tutor in theology. I trust he got as rich doctrinal *pickings* out of his readership as I got out of mine.

But in my thirteenth year, during the vacation of 1833, the blessed Spirit seemed to lay close siege to my rebellious heart, to reduce it once more to the obedience of Christ. I was assailed successively at every point of approach. Access was first attempted on the gentler side of my nature, through my sensibilities and my better aspirations. One of my sisters was a teacher at the Belper Pottery Sunday school, and liked to have me with her. The superintendent was Mr William Bourne, afterwards well known to London Methodism. By universal estimate he was a most admirable Christian ; as near perfection as one could well conceive. He was the first man I ever heard who knew how to address Sunday school children, and I can only remember five or six who could compete with him. One Sunday he took as his subject the beautiful and blessed death of one of the scholars who had “gone home” since the last Sabbath. I was so affected that on reaching home I could not eat. I should have there and then surrendered at discretion, but for the fact of my having just succeeded in

obtaining from a Circulating Library a book which I had been longing for for years: Smollett's translation of *Don Quixote*, in bulky but attractive volumes. This engrossing and diverting masterpiece of satirical romance dissipated next day all the softening seriousness which had been brooding over me.

The Divine Besieger's next assault was made through the avenue of terror. Alone in the dead of night, a sudden horror overwhelmed me. I felt as if I were dying, there and then. "The sorrows of death compassed me about, *the pains of hell gat hold upon me.*" I "roared by reason of the disquietness of my heart," awaking the whole family. With difficulty soothed and tranquillised, I vowed to God that, if spared till morning, I would give my heart to Him. In pursuance of this promise, I retired to my bedroom as soon as family prayer was over. I was about to fall upon my knees when the figures of Don Quixote and his Squire presented themselves to my imagination with insinuating and beckoning familiarity. I felt: *Farewell to Don Quixote and his confraternity of fun.* I can see myself now the very picture of a hesitating prodigal at the parting of the ways, as I stood with my half-shut chamber-door shaking in my tremulous, uncertain grasp. No Israelite in sight of Sinai could pine after the steaming savoury fleshpots and the piquant, pungent leeks and onions of the house of bondage more longingly than I was craving for one last literary Carnival before what seemed my Lenten fast. I reasoned with myself that the book must be paid for when taken back, and that it would be a wasteful pity to part with it unread. I resolved at last to finish it, and take it back, and then set about the working out of my salvation in a business-like and thorough way. I rushed downstairs and seized my idol, and was soon oblivious of the claims of God and of eternity.

The next, and, thank God! the victorious assault was on another side. There was given to me, all at once, a broad, clear, calm view of self-interest and self-preservation. It was the Sunday evening of the last week of my vacation. Before the next Sabbath I must be back again at school. My father was at a distance preaching. My mother was not well enough to go to chapel. She asked me to stay with her whilst the rest attended service and the after prayer-meeting. I was nothing loath. In the course of the evening my mother said

to me: "Benjamin, what do you mean to be when you are a man?" Accustomed to the utmost frankness, I at once replied: "Well, mother, since you ask so plainly, I must give a plain answer. To tell the truth, what I should like to be, and what I seem most cut out for, is a comic actor, a tale writer, and a man of letters generally." She said nothing, but fixed on me a look of unutterable anxiety and alarm. Instantly there came upon my mind a change, so sudden, strange and powerful that I never could regard it as a mere psychological phenomenon. It is said that drowning men see all their bygone life in one clear, strong, unbroken retrospect. At that moment I seemed to see my future foreshortened to my gaze with a reality and vividness which it were impossible to paint. I saw myself living a hollow and delusive life, the prey at first of vanity and dissipation, and then of hopelessness, remorse and ruin. I saw myself stretched upon an early despairing death-bed; a wasted life behind, and before—a wrecked eternity! I felt: I must not lose a moment, or my over-mastering imagination and my tyrannising passions will have me completely and for ever in their power. I found, years afterwards, in Byron's *Giaour* (his noblest poem) a wonderfully true description of that momentary state:—

"'Twas but a moment. . . .

That pause which pondered o'er his fate,
Oh! who its dreary length shall date?
Though in Time's record, nearly nought,
It was Eternity to Thought!
For infinite as boundless space
The thought that Conscience must embrace;
Which in itself can comprehend
Woe without name, or hope, or end."

I walked upstairs and fell upon my knees beside my bed, and simply prayed that God would not permit the view which He had just vouchsafed to me to vanish from my mind. I came downstairs, and found my baby-sister fretful and uneasy, so I took her in my arms and walked up and down the room and sung her off to sleep. I sung a hymn which I could never afterwards either hear or read without profound emotion:—

"O, that I could my Lord receive,
Who did the world redeem!"

That night I did not venture to close my eyes without praying earnestly that I might awake with the same clear spiritual vision which God had given me that evening. I spent most of the morning and afternoon in my bedroom in wrestling prayer; and after tea retired again for the same purpose; for I felt I must obtain the assurance of forgiveness before returning to my old associates and associations. As I ordinarily spent several hours a day in my bedroom reading, my retiring to it again after tea excited no surprise. As I prayed my penitence intensified to anguish. There fell upon me "a horror of thick darkness." I received an awful answer to my prayer:—

"Fain would I know my utmost ill,
And groan my nature's weight to feel,
To feel the clouds that round me roll,
The night that hangs upon my soul,
The darkness of my carnal mind,
My will perverse, my passions blind,
Scattered o'er all the earth abroad,
Immeasurably far from God."

No longer able to sustain myself upon my knees, I fell prostrate on the floor, and writhed and panted in an agony not far from death.

Meanwhile, my father had returned from his distant country appointment, and I heard him calling me from the foot of the stairs. I dried my eyes and composed my countenance as well as I could, and ran down. He said: "As you are going back to school, and all the rest are out, mother would like us to have prayer together." I sat down. Mother suggested we should have a hymn. My father chose one, and my mother struck the tune. She was blessed with one of the finest voices I have ever heard; but "for the last two vacations" weakness had forbidden her to sing aloud. My father gave out, in his grave and measured, yet intelligent and feeling way:—

"Peace, doubting heart! my God's I am;
Who formed me man, *forbids* my fear;
The Lord hath called me by my name;
The Lord protects, for ever near;
His blood for me did once atone,
And still He loves and guards His own."

My mother lifted up her voice with strength. Never in her healthiest days had I heard it more rich and ringing. As we

sung, a flood of light and love, of peace and joy, of assurance and of triumph, was poured into my heart as from the opened heaven. Articulate thunder from the sky could not have spoken a more commanding, satisfying: "Peace, be still"; "Fear not, for I have redeemed thee; I have *called thee by thy name*; thou art Mine." With rapturous confidence I sang:—

"I own His power, accept the sign,
And shout to prove the Saviour mine!"

It was my mother's swan-song. In a few months' time she was singing the new song before the Throne of God and of the Lamb.

Bishop William Taylor, in narrating his experience, said in his Transatlantic style: "Though I was converted young, I am persuaded that I got into the car of salvation at the last stopping station before the terminus." On hearing this I was reminded of my own case. I felt that though so early, I was only just in time. And so conscious was I of my own infirmity of purpose, and my continued susceptibility to the over-mastering illusions from which I had so hardly escaped, that I dreaded a return to my companions and associations. Blind Bartimæus could scarcely have prayed more piteously: "Lord, that I may receive my sight," than I entreated: Lord, that I may retain my sight! I besought the Lord that, in compassion to my weakness, He would take me to Himself at once. But the reply was clear: Go back to thy school-fellows, "and tell them what great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee."

With profound sincerity and self-surrender I asked: "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" I had acquired the notion—how I cannot tell; certainly not from either of my parents—that the correct way of inquiring of the Lord, when a believer is in extreme perplexity, was to ask believingly for a direct intimation of the Divine Will through the text on which the eye might fall on opening the Bible. "In simplicity," "at a venture," I took this course with child-like, it may be, with childish, confidence. At once I opened on a passage of the existence of which I had no previous idea: "But as for thee, stand thou here by Me, and I will speak unto thee all the commandments, and the statutes, and the judgments, which thou shalt teach them, that they may do

them" (Deut. v. 31). Was it surprising that I took this as a direct and unambiguous response to my inquiry, and as a Divine call to the study and the ministry of the Word? I felt that I had a vocation, a mission, a future. Without an hour's delay I set about what I now accepted as my life-work. I began a strenuous, systematic study of the Scriptures, with such helps as lay within my reach, which I can safely say has not been intermitted for more than fifty-seven years. I took from their shelves three books with the outside of which I had been familiar from my infancy, both on the shelf and on the floor, before packing and after unpacking. These were: Wood's *Dictionary of the Bible*; Wesley's *Notes on the New Testament*; and the first volume of Coke's *Commentary on the New Testament*, of which I had heard my father speak with warm appreciation. These I began to read conjointly. Happily, my class in school had begun the Greek Testament. Wood's article on *Repentance* stood me in good stead, both then and since, for personal edification, for pastoral instruction, and in the formation of a theological system. He says (I quote from memory): "True repentance involves an act of faith: 'They shall *look upon Me Whom they have pierced*, and they shall mourn.'" For the present I could not get further than the Beatitudes, as the vacation ended in a few days.

On my journey back to school I had the privilege of spending the night at the house of one of the great preachers who had most affected me: the Rev. John Anderson. Although it was past eleven P.M. when I reached his door, and the family were all in bed, and the lights put out, and the half-dressed orator had to demand from the bedroom window: "Who's there?" I was, none the less, treated with the kindest hospitality, as if I had been a belated prodigal come home at last.

The next morning, though I protested that I knew the way perfectly well, the kind family would not hear of my walking the miles from Leeds to Apperley Bridge alone. They impressed into my service a young man of leisure and of culture, a scion of one of the principal families in the Circuit, to "set" me at least as far as the great tannery, which bore upon its front the name J O P P A, in gigantic letters. Compelled thus irresistibly to "go a mile," he right Christianly went with me "twain." He had just been reading Wesley's *History of*

England, and was an ardent proselyte to the founder's charitable hypothesis that the Richard the Third of chronicle and tragedy was a myth of monkish malice and of false-penned party-spirit. So the echoes of Kirkstall Abbey took up once more the name of Richard the Third, but in a mild, respectful tone, as new to them as it was to me. I thus acquired a double introduction: to a worthy household of Leeds Methodists, and to my first problem of historical criticism.

It was, doubtless, well for me that my thoughts were thus pre-occupied. When I reached the playground, Henshaw greeted me with a warmth that tried the texture of my resolution: "O! Ben, my father's let me bring such a splendid lot of books!" I thanked him heartily; and we walked up and down together through the long June evening; I trying hard, but vainly, to reveal to him the change that had come upon me. Such is the delicacy of a school-boy's feeling, that, as I seemed so unaccountably reserved and reticent, he concluded, as he said next day, that I must have experienced some bereavement or other touching home-grief; so, shrinking from an inquisitiveness that might distress me, he took upon himself the whole burden of the talk, and told me his adventures and exploits in Liverpool during the vacation. In the bedroom, as soon as the master had gone, the old demand was made: "Now, Ben, tell us a tale. You must have got a lot of fresh ones." With all simplicity and frankness, I gave them the account of my conversion; but what was my distress and disconcertion to find that they took it as a mere piece of acting, as a travesty of experiences I had heard and read. They improvised a mimic love-feast, each successive speaker striving to outdo the former.

The next day, when Henshaw, in the kindest manner, asked me what had happened to make me so unwontedly grave and solemn, I answered: "Well, Jack, the fact is, I'm converted." The effect upon him was exactly what I feared: his chagrin and disappointment were uncontrollable. He pleaded passionately the pains he had taken to procure me books, the provision he had made, and the plans he had matured for a year's luxurious reading and gloating over our treasures. He next fell to entreaties and to promises, which I am sure, were, at the time, as sincere as they were splendid.

All this put to a terrific tension my determination to be

the Lord's. Henshaw and I had managed to keep side by side in class, and therefore side by side in the dining-room. And the connection was preserved on our moving up after some seventeen of the elder lads had left. So he was incessantly acting on me every day. He found it very hard to break off his habit of whispering to me at prayer-time. We marched in company along the coach-road to and from the chapel on Sundays and on week-nights ; to and from the Chevin on our annual picnic, and "forth and again" whenever we were taken out for a long afternoon stroll. And Henshaw was the only one who, from the first, believed in the reality of my conversion. The ten-crib-room boys took it as a well-performed farce which would soon be played out. When it was told the second-master, in whose class I then was, on the English side, that Gregory professed to be converted, he received the information with bitter and almost savage incredulity ; and the third-master, Mr Jackson, assured me years afterwards, when I had become his colleague in the tutorship, that it required full six weeks of keen and sceptical observation to convince him of my sincerity.

This all but universal disbelief in the honesty of my confession of Christ was disheartening in the extreme. However, the second-master was thoroughly convinced by my first monthly home-letter ; though it was written in the style of high-flown juvenile rhetoric and of effusive poetic diction which was natural to a lad of my temperament and predominantly imaginative reading. He called me to his desk, and, in the quietest and gentlest way, asked me from what author I had acquired my style of religious writing ; I told him I had never thought about a model at all. He frankly apologised for having put the question, on the ground that the phraseology was suggestive of a particular class of devotional composition. I have no doubt he was thinking of such books as Hervey's *Meditations*, and Elizabeth Rowe's *Devout Exercises of the Heart* ; books which, happily for me, did not come in my way till a year later, as my father had a very strong objection to them, on account of their inflated language, and their egoistic Calvinism. Mr Brownell, the master, made no direct reference to my conversion ; and although this surprised me at the time, I afterwards felt it to be judicious and delicate.

Thus for some time I had strong cause to press the

Psalmist's prayer : "Lead me in a plain path, because of my observers"; for my conduct was most narrowly inspected. And now came "the tug of war." At the time of my conversion, not one boy in the school made profession of religion, and the spiritual and moral tone amongst the lads had sunk deplorably from the high level at which I had found it in 1829. Now, in the course of my eager, open-hearted study of the Scriptures, I came upon Leviticus xix. 17 : "Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thine heart : thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbour, and not suffer sin upon him." I felt, at once, that this injunction was too plain to be evaded. So I began to reprove and remonstrate with my school-fellows, in the mildest, nicest, least assumptive and least offensive way I could command, for any direct breach of the Divine law of which I could not but be cognisant. Their breaches of the bye-laws of the establishment I saw to be no concern of mine, as the monitorial system had broken down and been cleared away, and I was invested with no authority or responsibility. Besides, some of these bye-laws I believed to be justly described by the impracticable. But my rebukes were not only laughed at, in many cases they aggravated the mischief.

The two great evils against which I had to witness were : impieties of speech, and selfish or wanton cruelties perpetrated by big lads on the little ones. The former evil was far more common then than now, both amongst "gentle and simple." It was reckoned as a sort of assertion of manliness. It was cultivated to rankness by both "arms of the service"; and begging soldiers and sailors were most injudiciously connived at as they fascinated us with their *yarns*. The matter was complicated by the fact that many of my own tales and comic recitations were interlarded with these naughty words, especially the sea-stories and sea-songs. A few of the boys had contracted the habit, first of quoting these phrases, and then of using them on their own account. Having borne my testimony against these acts of wickedness, I might have thought my duty at an end ; but for that stringent second clause : "and *not suffer sin upon him*." Now, I knew that, in many instances, it was within my power to prevent sin ; but only in one way, and that, to a Grove lad, the most hateful way conceivable : "*telling!*" The persecution, the "boycotting," the revengeful personal assaults which this would most certainly entail, were

terrible enough ; but they were as nothing when compared with the ignominy of the act itself. For a while I took refuge in the context : "Thou shalt not go up and down as a talebearer among thy people," backed up by the parallel passages, such as : "A talebearer revealeth secrets ; but he that is of a faithful spirit concealeth the matter." I also called to mind the fact, that, before I came to school at all, my mother had made me promise that I "would never be a *tell-tale*," and that I had almost resented the supposed necessity for any such injunction.

But all this would not satisfy my conscience. I could not but perceive that the gadding, plotting blabber of the Pentateuch, the Proverbs and Ezekiel was a very different character from the unwilling witness of evil whose conscience would not allow him to be "partaker of other men's sins," by misprision of gross wickedness which it was in his power to prevent by a prompt and resolute interference. I resolved to take the best advice within my reach. I could not consult my parents, for all our home-letters were inspected, as part of our school-work. I had no leader, for the boys' class, formerly led by the superintendent minister, had dwindled into nothing. I at last made up my mind to submit the case to the master in whose judgment, sympathy, conscientiousness and piety I had the strongest confidence. He was a very superior man ; afterwards a devoted minister. After hearing all my scruples and difficulties, he assured me that he was quite at a loss what course to recommend ; for whichever way he indicated he should feel that he had done wrong ; adding, that the only person who could solve the question was the Governor, as he was most kind-hearted, considerate and judicious, and was to me in *loco parentis*. But he was soon made to see that this very step would at once commit me, and that in the most invidious manner. The Governor was not likely to forget his responsibilities as Governor in fatherly tenderness to an individual boy. He would be so shocked at my disclosures that he would insist on my naming the offenders at once ; a command which I should certainly resist, as I could only turn informant after ample warning to the guilty lads, and as the very last resort.

It was plain that I must make up my mind for myself and by myself. I formed a resolve which I trust I have

endeavoured to keep from that day to this—though, alas! not always with such child-like simplicity and boyish bravery as then—namely, to be always guided by Scripture. After earnest prayer for direction and for grace to the only Counsellor Who was now accessible, I perceived it to be my clear duty to stop these evils, even though in a manner so distressing and humiliating to myself. The commandment seemed too positive and peremptory to be put aside: “Thou shalt in *any wise* rebuke,” and “*shalt not suffer sin.*” So I made up my mind, in God’s strength, to take the first opportunity of making known my purpose to the evildoers. I had not long to wait.

Every fine day before dinner, the bell called us all to “*Numbers.*” At that time the playground was divided into three departments by a high brick wall and two pairs of massive wooden gates. Mr Elam, the former proprietor of the estate, had been a great cultivator of wall-fruit, and when the premises had to be adjusted to the requirements of a large academy, the walls on which his peaches, apricots and nectarines had ripened, had been left standing and were used as a kind of muster-roll. Large black figures from one to a hundred were marked upon them, and each boy took his stand under the number which answered to his place in school, so that at least once a day he might undergo personal inspection as to his habiliments and physical condition. There was, however, an unfortunate break in the continuity of this wall, to make way for “the seven steps” which led up to the higher ground on which stood the school-room, the bake-house, the tailor’s room, the farm-yard and the “mistles” (*milkstalls*, cow-houses), etc. These steps partially shut off about the first twenty boys from the others. I was then the fourteenth boy in the school, and all above me or between me and the steps were a year or two my elders.

On the day on which my determination was arrived at, as soon as the inspecting master had disappeared behind the seven steps, a foul-mouthed lad “rapped out” some naughty words. Thereupon I stepped out and said aloud: “Now, lads, I can’t stand this any longer. I’ve begged and prayed you to give up this sort of language, but I see it is of no use, so I give you fair notice that you will have to give it up.” “How will you stop it?” they exclaimed with contempt, glancing at their

own play-developed muscularity, and at my puny, pale physique. "There is but one way," I answered. "What's that?"—"I shall *tell*."

The storm of scorn and hate and rage which burst upon me then was just what I expected. The two strongest lads (one of whom had been particularly kind to me before) started from beneath their numbers, and shook their fists in my face, each crying: "Do you mean to say that you'll tell of *me*!" To this I could give but one answer: "I hope not, Bill; I hope not, Chat (Charles); but if you try to steal the little lads' milk from them any more, there's no help for it." "You'll have a nice time of it, my boy," said they. I replied: "O, I know that well enough! but you may be sure of one thing: I shall never tell of anything you do to me."

The marching order was heard, and we filed off into the dining-room.

At supper-time that evening (half-past five) the crisis came. Supper consisted of a piece of bread, and a can of milk, supposed to hold about half a pint; but in the thirsty summer-time the milk supply ran short. The regulation quantity was brought into the dining-room and doled out by the Governor into just a hundred carefully counted cans; so no one boy could have more than one canful without robbing some other boy of his entire share. A few of the topmost lads, called "waiters," were entrusted with the carrying of these cans from the Governor to the other boys; and the two big lads above alluded to, being both "waiters," were wont to appropriate two canfuls apiece, and thus leave two dry-throated little fellows with no milk at all. This was the more cruel, inasmuch as no one could get a drop of water without hard-won leave, or incurring the penalty attached to running out of bounds. Our thirst was sometimes so intense that the big lads struggled in the bedroom for the rain-water in the master's washing-jug. On this particular evening the two boys above-mentioned, who happened to sit just opposite to me, each appropriated, as usual, a little boy's modicum of milk in addition to his own. I at once warned them that if they did not take the milk to the boys to whom it belonged I should inform the Governor. 'You won't,' they both said with contemptuous incredulity. Up went my hand—the prescribed token that a boy wished to speak to the Governor or a master. Instantly one of the boys tore the

hard thick crust off his "portion," and hurled it at my mouth with such violence as to cut my lip and make it bleed. But as my hand was still uplifted, they lost no time in carrying the milk to the poor little fellows whom they would have robbed of it.

Returning to their seats they gave me notice that I should have the whole school about my ears as soon as we got outside. This was no more than I had mentally bargained for. They two were the strongest and most daring, and mainly on that account the most popular and influential lads of the whole hundred: the elder of them was our great athlete ("the cock of the school").

I had obtained from the library Coke and Moore's *Life of Wesley*, and had adopted the system of daily self-examination drawn up by Wesley while at Oxford. Every evening I used to betake myself to the most secluded portion of the tripartite playground. It was shut in from the rest of the playground by the wall aforesaid and the school-room. There I was wont to spend great part of the evening in putting myself through the ordeal of those probing questions. This time, however, I could only pray that God would be merciful to me and to my "enemies, and change their hearts," or strengthen me to bear whatever He might suffer them to inflict upon me. Like Hezekiah, I must have "sore mourned like a dove"; for I could not but be touched and smoothed by the sympathetic and responsive plainings of the community of pigeons domiciled in the range of cotes that stretched above the stable and the wash-house. Nevertheless, I was unutterably happy; profoundly thankful for the grace that had enabled me to take the decisive step, and confident in the sustaining faithfulness of God. After I had paced up and down for about a quarter of an hour, finding myself unmolested so far, it occurred to me as injudicious to remain where I was. I thought: This is just the place for an undisturbed boy-baiting. So I resolved to take my book and walk up and down the longer playground reading, as if nothing particular had happened.

But just as I turned the corner of the school-room, I met my two threateners face to face, at the head of what seemed to be a levy *en masse* of the whole ninety and nine. Such was the tension of my nervous system that, happily for me, at this moment it gave way, and I burst into tears. Instantly the stronger lad of the two wheeled round, and stood with

clenched fists and in defiant attitude between me and the crowd he had himself collected, and shouted: "The first lad that touches Ben Gregory, I'll knock him down!" His comrade imitated both his action and his words; and for the rest of the evening, at first both, and then one of them, had to act as my bodyguard, to protect me from the violence which they themselves had stirred up against me. From that time I had not so much as a hard word or a sour look from either of them.

I had the satisfaction of completely stopping that particular form of cruelty to little lads—the robbing them of their milk, as well as of limiting the area, and thus lessening the frequency, of all such barbarities. Mere remonstrance I found to be altogether unavailing, as tyranny over the younger and the weaker was regarded by many boys as one of the traditional prerogatives of seniority. The more abused a lad himself had been in his earlier school-life, the more resolved he seemed to exact reprisals from his own juniors. This was an avowed principle with some. When I said to a boy: "I'm surprised at *you*; you surely haven't forgotten what you suffered when you first came"; the answer was: "That's just it; it's my turn now."

In cases like this the only thing that told was the threat to "tell"; and that never failed but once, and then for a very short time. One of my chiefest chums was amongst the few lads who had caught the habit of indulging in iniquities of language. I told him that as I knew how hard it is to break a bad habit, I should give him a certain number of warnings, and bear with it for a time, if I saw that he really was trying to get the better of it. It was too soon apparent that he was making no such effort. So I informed him that the next time he made me hear such language I should forthwith *tell*. He dared me to it in words which at once brought the matter to a point. As I raised my hand in token that I wished to speak to a master, the boy struck me in the mouth with all the force that could be lent by fury to an athletic arm, snapping one of my top front teeth in two, and making my lips and gums to bleed profusely. Holding out to him the fragment of my tooth, I said: "There, Jack, you've stopped me this time; I can't tell now without letting the master see what you've done to me. So you must have another chance." I never heard an objectionable word from him from that moment. My gap-

toothed remonstrance was quite sufficient. I bore about this stigma till my beginning to speak in public compelled me to spend a guinea on the services of a dentist in Derby.

One fact was a special source of thankfulness: I never was obliged to do the thing which was to me far more dreadful than any other form of martyrdom—because it seemed to school-boy sentiment so humiliating and detestable—the actual *telling of* a school-fellow. When it came to the pinch, every one gave in. Not that both the evils I had felt bound to set my face against were entirely suppressed. Big-boy barbarities worse than I had ever suspected any Grove lad to be capable of subsequently came to light. But my witness against these things was not without considerable effect. School-boy cruelty was driven into corners and kept at bay.

I soon learnt another lesson from Coke and Moore's *Life of Wesley*; namely, that if I could not "*find*" Christian companions, I must set to work to "*make*" them. I felt I could not save my own soul unless I tried "by all means to save some" others also. I resolved to buttonhole my school-fellows in succession, taking them in the order of likelihood, seeming susceptibility and probable impressibility. I think I began with Joseph Eckersley: a good-natured, companionable lad, who loved a game much better than a lesson, and a talk better than either. His father, now that David Stoner and John Smith were gone, was the most fervid Revivalist in the Connexion. Joe Eckersley was a comparatively easy conquest, he being strongly inclined to religion, but in great need of encouragement and fellowship. He "held on and held out to the end" of a life which just reached to manhood.

The next was Thomas M'Nicol. Then I made up to James Smetham, with whom I was to be so happily associated in after life. We became, at once, the warmest friends. But he had then the fickleness of genius as well as that of youth; and, for a time, allured by a more fascinating friendship, broke away from all companionship with me. I thought however: "A verse may catch him who a sermon flies," so I again netted him by some *Lines*, spun out of my very soul, beginning:—

"I had a friend—I loved him, and my heart
 Clung to him as frail ivy to a wall;
 We seemed as if not even death could part;
 We loved like David and the son of Saul."

This brought back, and soldered into strength, an intimacy which for half a century was to me a source of inexpressible pleasure and intellectual and spiritual enjoyment and advantage. I next won over poor Tom Eastwood, who, a few years afterwards, was drowned in the Ouse at York; and then Richard Eland. I gathered a little religious set, numbering at one time twelve, out of the hundred boys. We had no facilities for united prayer, but we "spake often one to another," and "strengthened" each other's "hands in God." But soon our number fell to five: Smetham, M'Nicoll, Eckersley and Eland. The last-named became a very useful minister, and the father of the Rev. R. J. Eland, and of Miss M. J. Eland, of the China Inland Mission.

But in the winter came "the Great Revival," through the preaching of the Rev. Robert Aitken, M.A.¹ As every boy but one became for some months a sincere and ardent professor of religion, and I had been "in Christ before" any one of them, and had formed a little nucleus of associated seekers of salvation, and had laboured hard for the conversion of the rest, I was, in this stage of religious intensity, regarded as a sort of rallying-point and referee in spiritual matters. As we walked through the Grove to the chapel before the memorable service, I was good-naturedly rallied by the wildest of the lads: "You know, Ben, when we come back, we shall all belong to you." When we held, as we were then allowed to do, lad prayer-meetings and lad love-feasts, I was generally expected to lead off; and the boys naturally felt freer to bring their little difficulties and scruples, and cases of conscience to one of themselves, taken from among boys.

Meanwhile, a heavy grief had fallen on me in a moment. A letter was put into my hand announcing the death of my dear mother, after a few hours' illness. For a time the blow disabled me entirely from my school-work, and the head-master considerably relieved me from it. It must have appeared from these pages that my mother had greatly contributed to the formation of my tastes and habitudes in two principal particulars: the cultivation of a passion for reading, especially imaginative reading, and the impressing on my mind the absolute necessity of the religion of a renewed and

¹ See p. 108, etc.

consecrated heart. It is curiously illustrative of my mother's tastes that the baby-sister whom I had carried up and down as I sang my penitential hymn: "O that I could my Lord receive!" etc., was named *Clarissa*, in memory of Richardson's great moral heroine *Clarissa Harlowe*. It was a great comfort to know that the conversion of her eldest son had been to her a potent consolation during her last few months of weakness and of suffering, strengthening and brightening her own faith, and hope and love.

Whilst doing my poor little best to counsel and to hearten such of my school-fellows as seemed to need companionship and converse, I was, as may be well believed, not seldom in perplexity myself. My chief discouragement just then arose from a mistaken notion which I had somehow acquired—certainly not from any direct teaching—that in case of any clouding of conscience, I must receive from heaven a direct and indubitable manifestation, or, as it were, *notification* of my acceptance; not, perhaps, so vivid as at first, but yet assuring and enlivening. I had not yet learnt the practical theology of the lines:—

"O may the least omission pain
My well-instructed soul,
And *drive me to the blood again*
That makes the wounded whole!"

I had not learnt the art or acquired the habit of a prompt recurrence to, and a perfect rest in, the atonement and advocacy of our Blessed Saviour. How truly Luther says: "He is a good (practical) theologian who has firm hold of this truth."

My instinct of soul-preservation showed me clearly that, for at least the first three-quarters of a year of my new-born life, I must keep myself aloof from the over-mastering fascinations of secular literature. I felt that my school-work would supply me with as much of this, to me, seductive nectar as I could well digest. "The primrose-path of dalliance" with the Graces and the Muses was Bye-path Meadow to my as yet unsteady feet. For the first nine months I was *puer unius libri*: a boy of one book. I read nothing out of school but my Bible, books directly explanatory of the Bible, religious biography, especially of young disciples, and books on experimental religion. But, indeed, I found myself not at all badly off. The Bible itself was a splendid library of a rich and

varied literature. Tom M'Nicoll lent me, what his father had given him—the most exquisite little pocket-Bible I have ever seen. This was my constant companion, and it lay under my pillow every night. Most truly could I say: "O how love I Thy law! it is my meditation all the day." The masters, doubtless from delicacy of feeling, left me to my own course in this respect. One day, however, at dinner-time, when I was buried in my Bible, Mr Brownell leaned over the table to me and said: "Great peace have they that love Thy law: and nothing shall offend them." The truth of this I hourly felt.

And the narrow way of rigidly religious reading bore no resemblance to a bare and arid desert-path: it bloomed and blossomed all along with hedge-row flowers, and with ripe, refreshing berries; it was bordered with graceful, waving fronds, and it glistened with the dew of heaven. Watson's *Conversations for the Young* I found to be a richly stored "cupboard of food and cabinet of pleasure." It is a fine Introduction to the study of the Holy Scriptures. I also got hold of a goodly volume: Harris' *Natural History of the Bible*, replete with interesting information; and the literary charm of Coke and Moore's *Life of Wesley* was far from insignificant.

Among the biographies which affected me most deeply were those of De Renty, in the *Christian Library*, and of Henry Longden, of Sheffield. From these memoirs, from Scripture, from our hymns on *Seeking for Full Redemption*, from petitions in public prayers; and from observations in sermons, I became aware of the existence and the accessibility of a higher zone of Christian experience than that on which the believer enters in Justification and Regeneration. One day Mr Brownell took occasion to tell, in my hearing, of a sermon he had heard in Leeds from William Shaw, on: "I am come that they may have life, and may have it *more abundantly*." Mr Brownell was so full of this discourse that he could not help expatiating on it. The kernel of the exposition was the verse of our hymn:—

"Acceptance through His only Name,
 Forgiveness in His blood, we have;
 But *more abundant life* we claim
 Through Him who died our souls to save,
 To sanctify us by His blood,
 And fill with all the life of God."

One Sunday morning he preached from: "My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest." He dwelt with, to me, subduing power on the realised and consciously abiding presence of God, as the believer's privilege and as the inviolable rest, the unbroken *Sabbath keeping* which is its sure result. On this blessedness I set my heart. I scarcely felt near enough to the second-master to make him my confidant, so I applied to the third-master, Mr Elijah Jackson, to direct my reading on the subject. Of course I began with Wesley. His sermon on *Christian Perfection* I found altogether too polemical to suit my purpose. But his treatise on the subject was stimulating and carminative as well as tonic and directive. The most helpful book (biographies excepted) which came in my way was Pipe's *Dialogues on Entire Sanctification*. But of all printed matter on the subject nothing did me so much good as Wesley's sermons on *Sin in Believers*; *Repentance of Believers*; *Satan's Devices*; and *Wandering Thoughts*. The steadying, sedative effect of the sermon on *Satan's Devices* was of especial benefit. I was taught the danger and the folly of allowing even the pursuit of perfect holiness, by its own avidity and eagerness, to clip the wings of its ascent, by damping its joyousness and bearing down its buoyancy.

"Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. By Whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God." I was like a young Crown-prince, standing on the battlemented balcony of his hereditary palace-fort, and gazing out upon a limitless expanse of glorious territory all his own. Whatever transformation might await me was no longer "from darkness to light," but the being "changed *from* glory *into* glory," as by the Spirit of the Lord.

But still I was not seldom conscious of the upspringing of some "root of bitterness": the twitch and darnel of my old wild nature. My most importunate besetment was the old domineering literary ambition. It showed a reptilian tenacity of life. Or rather, it was like Job's tree: "If it be cut down, it will sprout again . . . though the stock thereof die in the ground; yet through the scent of water it will bud, and bring forth boughs like a plant." My school-class was reading the *Iliad* and the *Æneid*: the former with a charming English Introduction. The witchery of the two great poems was

almost overmastering. I had to compose for myself a little rhymed collect as a kind of Grace before such dainty meat. Of my versicles I can only remember two :—

“If vanity has warped my mind,
And fancy fooled it, and if pride
Has whispered

Great God ! forgive the ambitious thought,
Which Thy proud enemy inspires ;
And since Thou hast in mercy wrought
So vast a change in my desires,”—

Then followed a counting “all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord.”

I became perfectly convinced that (1) Perfect Love to God and man is attainable in this life ; (2) that it has been actually attained by many who have both experienced it and exemplified it ; (3) that the fact of the fewness of these instances is not due to any restriction imposed by the Divine Sovereignty, but to negligence, unbelief, wrong teaching and wrong theory, from which have resulted an injurious subsidence and depression of the Christian life, instead of that uplifting which the Church of Christ must otherwise have realised, and that by the very law of its life ; (4) that this blessedness is not the privilege of a few choice spirits, but is equally accessible to every one of God’s children ; (5) that, though it is approached by growth, it is attained by faith ; (6) that the date of its attainment, “the sooner or later,” is determined by the hungering and thirsting with which it is desired, the eager resolution with which it is pursued, the hopefulness with which it is anticipated, and the “obedient faith” with which it is sought and claimed from “the God of all grace.”

But it is noteworthy that, as in the case of my conversion, so in this subsequent advance, what brought the matter to an issue was the instinct of soul-preservation intensified by the Spirit of God. In my regular course of Bible-reading I came upon Numbers xxxiii. 55, 56 : “But if ye will not drive out the inhabitants of the land from before you ; then shall those which ye let remain of them be as pricks in your eyes, and as thorns in your sides, and they shall vex you in the land wherein ye dwell. And it shall come to pass, that as I thought to do unto them, so will I do unto you.” This

passage was "borne in upon my mind" with an arousing impact. There was one "prick" in mine eyes which harassed me like the spines which lacerate the traveller in a tropical forest. This was my inborn and overweening love of approbation, or rather, admiration. And there was one thorn in my side which pierced my very heart: a slavish "fear of death," I was in the then condition of the West Indian blacks: that of "apprenticeship" to freedom, as distinct from full emancipation; but I longed for perfect liberty.

On February 10th, 1834, every boy in the school but one being in a state of intense religious earnestness, Mr Brownell, anxious to make the most of the high tide of gracious feeling, closed the night-school with a hymn and prayer. He gave out four verses, which gave voice exactly to my own spiritual condition:—

"My God! I know, I feel Thee mine,
And will not quit my claim,
Till all I have is lost in Thine,
And all renewed I am.

"I hold Thee with a trembling hand,
But will not let Thee go,
Till steadfastly by faith I stand,
And *all* Thy goodness know."

Thus far doubtless for us new converts; and then, being himself "on full stretch for Perfect Love," he gave forth, from lips touched with a live coal from the altar:—

"Refining fire, go through my heart,
Illuminate my soul;
Scatter Thy life through every part,
And sanctify the whole.

"O that it *now* from heaven might fall,
And all my sins consume!
Come, Holy Ghost, for Thee I call,
Spirit of burning, come."

And it came to pass that as I sang the prayer I was answered. As if that dingy, oil-lit school-room had been Carmel, and that dreary winter evening had been the Day of Pentecost, "the Holy Ghost *fell* upon" me. I fell upon my face as consciously cleansed as the poor Samaritan leper

who at the feet of Jesus gave glory to God ; as indubitably as the poor woman who, "with a trembling hand," touched the hem of the Great Physician's garment, and "felt in her body that she was healed of that plague," so surely did I feel, in my inmost nature, that what no earthly medicine-man could ever do in a long and lingering lifetime was accomplished in an instant. And I have no doubt that as I at that moment touched the floating fringe of Christ's High-Priestly vestment, He, on His part, felt "Some one has touched Me," felt "that virtue had gone out of Him." In any case, Jesus said, with an assuring emphasis which no language could convey : "Son, be of good cheer, thy faith hath made thee whole." And the boy "*was* made whole from that hour"; till, some years later, failing faith brought failing health of soul.

In 1834 I was enabled to deliver my first testimony at a Methodist Lovefeast. And a memorable Lovefeast it was. In the first week of that year, almost contemporaneously with "the great Revival" at Woodhouse Grove, another wonderful awakening took place in the contiguous Circuit, Yeadon. The phrase "a Revival broke out" was never more descriptive of such an event than at this time and place. It did not occur in connection with any special services, or with the preaching of any distinguished Revivalist. There had been no very noticeable "move" except in the minister's own family, "four" of whom had been converted "in one week. This was made the means of inducing several persons, who had been for some time under good impressions, to become decided." But these accessions were neither caused by nor the cause of any special stir. "There was no exciting cause whatever to begin it, but 'the power of God.'"

Nearly two years before, when the cholera was prevalent in this neighbourhood, a prayer-meeting was commenced at noon, every day in the week, to be held for half-an-hour, for the purpose of beseeching the Lord to preserve the inhabitants from that dreadful scourge ; and in this the Lord answered our prayers. When this plague was removed, we still determined to continue our noon prayer-meetings, and especially to pray for a revival of the work of God." Before the happy outbreak, the noon prayer-meeting had dwindled down to six regular attendants besides the preacher. These were all local preachers : Slater, Preston, Starkey, Kenyon, Dawson, and another, each of

whom I have heard and conversed with. One day, at Christmas time, a juggler was performing his feats in Yeadon Street, accompanied by a fiddler, when the latter was suddenly seized with overwhelming conviction of sin, and fell upon his knees, and there and then, poured out agonising cries for mercy. The same day, at Rawdon, a weaver at his loom was stricken down in like manner.

"God's arm was made bare in such a way as to . . . constrain us to say: 'This is the Lord's doing; and it is marvellous in our eyes.' . . . The spirit of conviction was applied with such power, and became so general that in many houses business was suspended for some days together. Such was the number of the penitents, and the depth of distress in which many of them were, that we were obliged for some time to hold a prayer-meeting in the chapel every day, from morning until night; and it was no uncommon thing to see persons going along the streets to the house of prayer weeping because of the distress of their minds, determined to seek the Lord; while others were returning with joy and gladness, blessing God for what He had done for their souls. . . . In Yeadon the number of our new converts is nearly six hundred; in Guiseley, nearly two hundred and fifty; and in Rawdon upwards of a hundred. . . . Yeadon does not number more than two thousand six hundred inhabitants; and Guiseley and Rawdon one thousand five hundred each."¹

Thus out of a population of five thousand six hundred, nearly one thousand were "added to the Lord" and "to the Church" in the course of three months. In March a grand provisional reception meeting was held in Yeadon Chapel, the centre of the three villages. "The old Society, consisting of about six hundred members, were nearly all present, and nine hundred new converts, to each of whom I [Mr Wilde, the minister] spoke personally in giving them notes of admittance 'on trial.'" Surely not many such scenes have been witnessed since, on the day of Pentecost, the "three thousand" were added to the "hundred and twenty."

Very shortly after this famous recognition meeting, a Sunday afternoon Lovefeast was held at Woodhouse Grove, and the three revived and redoubled churches naturally wished to take cognisance of, and to draw still further animation from, the yet more wonderful awakening amongst the preachers' sons in their immediate neighbourhood. So each of the three Societies sent a glad contingent to the rendezvous. In they

¹ *Wesleyan Methodist Magazine*, June, 1854.

trooped on that fine spring Sabbath, when buds were bursting, and "the time of singing of birds was come," and the rural sights and sounds were all delightful, and the rooks in the Grove cawed out their content as the lads marched down the coach-road to the chapel. The new converts were radiantly happy, and "old stagers" felt their youth renewed. The chapel was crowded to excess. The singing was triumphal; a veritable Palm Sunday *Gloria in Excelsis*. For the ninety and nine boy voices were almost drowned by the vociferous exultation of their village friends. If ever Wesley's three directions for good congregational singing were observed, they were on that occasion: "Sing *all*; sing *lustily* and *with a good courage*; above all, sing *spiritually*." And, assuredly, they did "not sing too slow."

I now saw it to be my duty to venture once again into the flowery meads and varied pleasure-grounds and blooming orchards of a humanistic literature. I felt it to be a pity, as well as an ungracious and ungrateful slight, to miss the opportunity, which might not recur for years, of reading some of the rare choice books which Henshaw had procured me from his father's library: such as a metrical translation of the *Argonautica* of Apollonius of Rhodes; which, though not enchanting in its beauty, yet contains many charming pictures, and wears the simple native grace of classical antiquity. Then there were books at hand in which grace and nature intertwined, like the "wreathen work" of gold which enriched and beautified the temple and the tabernacle. One lad lent me the poems of Dr Byrom, friend of the two Wesleys; a satiric saint and moralist, at once humorist and hymnist. To this was prefixed a Life of that quaint old Manchester Methodist, equally distinguished for devoutness and for drollery. The book was as entertaining as it was edifying.

A book that came into my possession most pleasantly was far more influential than Dr Byrom's poems in the formation of my tastes and sentiments. My conversion and my subsequent experiences had regulated rather than repressed the avidity of my intellectual acquisitiveness. I buckled to my school-work with a will as well as a zest. Hence I progressed apace in subjects for which I had a natural aptitude. As to arithmetic and geometry I was very slow, as they did not interest me much. Simpson's Euclid, under Mr Jackson's

patient, skilful, hearty teaching, had for me a potent charm ; and thus became a most important and, as it seemed, essential factor in my mental training.

Our classical examiner at that time was no less imposing a personage than the Rev. Thomas Galland, M.A., who, now that Clarke and Watson were deceased, was, I believe, justly regarded as the most accomplished scholar in the Methodist Ministry.

In one respect he was the best examiner I ever knew. Whilst very sensitive as to minute technical accuracy, he tried to ascertain to what extent the school-work of a boy had taken hold of the lad's own individual intelligence, and to what extent in turn his intelligence had taken hold of the work. But he was, to some extent, a man of moods, dependent, one would think, upon his physical condition. On the May morning in 1834 when our class stood before him, Homer in hand, he was evidently in his stricter state of mind. Now at that time I enjoyed to a most restful and helpful extent the Christian virtue of "indifference." My working hypothesis was that expressed by the old motto : "*Duties are ours ; results are God's.*" This endowed me with a happy imperturbability highly conducive to presence of mind, and a free command of my resources. The usage was for each boy in succession to read out the Greek, clause by clause, or word by word, in grammatical order, rendering it into the best English he could command. The lads above me had a very poor time of it. They were plainly overawed and disconcerted, and did themselves and their teacher grievous wrong, doing far worse than they would have done, and, in fact, had done many times before at the head-master's desk. The passage selected was the magnificent altercation between Agamemnon and Achilles. I knew that I knew every word of it, both by head and by heart. No sooner had I finished the translation than the warm-hearted examiner thrust his hand into his pocket, took out a coin, and tossing it across the table, said : "There, my lad, that's worth a shilling any day !" After dinner the Governor sent to me and said : "Mr Galland wants to see you in the garden." On my joining him he began in the grave and gentle tone of a good old "preacher of the Gospel," to ask me whether I had given my heart to God, exhorted me to follow in my father's steps, and, on shaking hands, put a sovereign to my shilling.

That year a change was made in the mode of distributing the prizes. Before the ceremony took place, the books to be awarded were all brought into the dining-room, and ranged at the top of the middle table. The names fixed upon by the examiners as worthy of distinction were then read out in order, and as each name was uttered, the boy who bore the name was called up to choose the volume he preferred; so long as any choice remained. Now, at the Grove, at that time, classics always took precedence, and the lad who had most favourably impressed the classical examiner secured the highest prize. The result of this arrangement was, that though the race might be to the swift, the battle was not always to the strong. Thus it happened. For all-round proficiency there were several lads more worthy of the highest prize than the one who took it, and for technical accuracy, both in Greek and Latin, two at least surpassed him. However, my name was read out first for "proficiency in classical learning." It did not take me long to choose my book: *The Poetical Works of William Cowper: With an Introductory Essay by James Montgomery.*

This was a splendid catch. Almost from infancy I had been familiar with the popular pieces of the genial and godly bard, but I had happily not yet read his larger works. Passages from them my father often quoted in conversation. But my father had judiciously discouraged a premature perusal of high-class poems, with no one to point out their beauties and felicities. This mistake I had fallen into in the case of Thomson's *Seasons*, and of some of Shakespeare's plays, such as *Measure for Measure*, and *Much Ado about Nothing*. But the poetic works of Cowper seemed to come into my possession just in "the nick of time." Under the awakening guidance of Montgomery I could now luxuriate in a leisurely and holiday fashion, in the charming and yet tranquillising English scenery which Cowper loved to paint, as one who wanders at his own sweet will on the pathways of a royal park. Or rather, I could take a meditative Sabbath stroll through those ripe and waving cornfields, the Blessed Master with me—and "pluck and eat" the golden "ears, rubbing them in my hands."

Amongst the "books that have influenced me" I must give a high place to Cowper's *Poems*, and his *Letters*, subsequently read. Not the least important of the lessons I derived from these delightful compositions was a conviction—which

well-nigh sixty years of reading, observation, reflection and experience have powerfully confirmed—of the delusiveness and danger of a light-hearted latitudinarianism, which soon becomes light-headed too : a specious, spurious rationalising on revealed verities.

My personal indebtedness to Cowper, in the training of my judgement, taste and sentiment, it would be ungrateful not to own. First, and most of all, it was from my Grove-prize, in 1834, especially from the poem entitled *The Progress of Error*, that I acquired the sensitive and sacred dread of what Montgomery calls, "the propagation of false opinions," which has been of such incalculable service to me in fulfilling my Ordination vows. Such passages as these left an indelible impression on my mind and heart :—

"No wild enthusiast ever yet could rest
Till half mankind were like himself possessed.
Philosophers who darken and put out
Eternal Truth by everlasting doubt ;
Church-quacks, with passions under no command,
Who fill the world with doctrines contraband,
Discov'ers of they know not what, confined
Within no bounds—the blind that lead the blind ;
To streams of popular opinion drawn,
Deposit in those shallows all their spawn."

It is wonderful to note the exact applicability to this last decade of the nineteenth century of delineations of society more than a hundred years ago. Who can fail to recognise the modern counterparts of this description :—

"Thus men go wrong with an ingenious skill ;
Bend the straight rule to their own crooked will ;
And with a clear and shining lamp supplied,
First put it out, then take it for a guide.
Halting on crutches of unequal size,
One leg by truth supported, one by lies ;
They sidle to the goal with awkward pace,
Secure of nothing—but to lose the race."

My reading during the vacation of 1834 was for the most part incidental. On my walk to Leeds to take coach for home, to my great surprise and delight, Mr Brownell accompanied me for a mile or two, and on parting made me a present of a beautiful little book just published : Dr Richard Winter

Hamilton on *Prayer*. This was voluptuous reading, yet strengthening and nourishing withal. It abounds in, or rather is made up of splendid passages; but is, like his printed sermons, over-burdened with grandiloquence.

Much of my time was spent in pilgrimages to my mother's grave. I rocked my grief to rest by composing a little elegiac lay, of which I now remember the first and the two last verses:—

“There is a spot where oft I've lain,
Nor ceased the tears my cheek to lave,—
How could my heart its grief restrain
On Mother's grave?

“Give me Thy grace, that till I lie,
Like her, beneath the swelling sod,
I ne'er may dastardly deny
My Mother's God.

“Thou Hearer of a mother's prayer,
Let her firm faith to me be given;
That, at the last, even I may share
My Mother's heaven.”

CHAPTER VI

FROM BOY TO MASTER

A SUDDEN quadrupling of one's income is a great event, either to a school-boy or a millionaire. And when this occurs through one's first reception of a stated salary in return for stated services, the event marks an epoch in one's little life. This most unexpected multiplication of means occurred to me on my return to school after the vacation of 1834.

Mr Slugg, after describing the monitors whose duty was "to assist in preserving order in the dining-room," says: "There were other monitors for other departments of school management." He places "shoe-monitor" at the top of the list. Being the best paid, he was naturally regarded as the highest official in our little State, receiving from the Civil List threepence a week in addition to the normal penny. These stipendiary monitorships formed a kind of Civil Service. Into this public employment I found myself installed on the first "Court-day" after the resumption of our academic life.

But no school duties could divert me from a steady preparation for the ministry of the Word, which I now felt to be the calling of my life. Amongst the most beneficial books I studied at this time must be reckoned Richard Watson's *Catechism on the Evidences of Christianity*; being the *Third Part* of the Conference Catechism. A portion of this had to be learned and recited to the Governor each Sunday afternoon by the boys in the highest class. This gave the Governor an opportunity, of which he made admirable use, of talking to us on religious subjects in a free, fatherly and attractive way.

About this time a rich accession was made to the school library by the generosity of the Rev. Richard Tabraham, afterwards so famous for enthusiastic total abstinence, for microscopic thrift, and for a brisk and brave longevity. It comprised about a hundred volumes, beginning with Adam's *Roman Antiquities*, and finishing with a complete set of the

Youth's Instructor. I began with the first volume on the list, to balance which it was natural to betake oneself to Potter's *Antiquities of Greece*. These works were of great service to more than one generation of students. The liveliness and realism of Adam's work rendered it attractive to a boy. It is a curious fact that, in boyhood and ever since, I have found it a highly recreative as well as remunerative occupation to read a book of reference straight on. The great Christian reasoner, Dr Paley, records that in his omnivorous youth he never wasted time in debating with himself which book he should read next; but decided the question by a species of toss-up. This system certainly secured an ample miscellaneousness of mental aliment. It will be seen that, though my own boyish reading was not determined by the dictatorship of Chance, it was yet dependent on a kind of "natural selection," imposed by my environment. In this way I was led at this time to peruse a work which young expectants of the Christian Ministry might, I think, all study with advantage: Lord Chesterfield's *Letters to his Son*. I found this misunderstood book both interesting and edifying. As I sat with it in my hand, one winter's Saturday evening, my clever school-fellow, Booth Bacon, came to me, and said: "Ben, you seem to be having a rare good time over that worldly book." To which the reply was: "I am trying to find out how far an earnest Christian should cultivate good breeding and the 'Art of pleasing.'"

At Christmas, 1834, a great boon was granted me. On my return journey after the vacation, I was instructed to pass the inevitable night in Leeds at the house of the Rev. Joseph Fowler. This was my introduction to an eminent minister, with whom I was to be so happily associated in after years. I found him to be the most affable, the most attentive, and every way the most captivating gentleman with whom I had yet been brought in contact. He treated me much more like an equal and an old acquaintance than like a school-boy sojourner for a single night. He asked me about my father, about the Belper preachers, and Belper Methodism generally; about the Governor and masters, about my reading, and the state of matters at the school, with the most winning frankness and consideration. His only act of patronage was the very welcome one of leaving a sum of money in my hand on

bidding me goodbye. This he followed up by requesting the Governor to allow me to spend the Christmas holidays at his house with my school-fellow, his son Robert.

This was for me a glorious winter-windfall. Most of my evenings were taken up with reading to the four ladies: Mrs and Miss Fowler, and Mrs Fowler's mother and sister—Mrs Hartley and Miss Louisa Hartley of Sunderland, who were also spending Christmas at the Brunswick preacher's house. Miss Hartley was afterwards well known as Mrs Perks, of Wolverhampton. The book chosen was the just then published *Life and Correspondence of Hannah More*, by W. Roberts; with her Poetical Works. We all being familiar with her popular writings, these volumes were deeply interesting to us. As Methodists, we were particularly struck with the craving for the witness of the Spirit, expressed by this devoted woman on her death-bed, and her crying with reiteration and intense earnestness: "*Say unto my soul, I am thy salvation.*" I found in her *Inflexible Captive* passages replete with lofty civic sentiment, which I committed to memory.

Yet even these pleasant evenings had two delightful breaks. At that time Mr Fowler's colleagues were the Revs. Robert Young and William Barton, both of them "famous in the congregation, men of renown." The three ministers held a kind of Christmas Symposium at the superintendent's house, to which Mr Fowler with his unflinching kindness invited his young guest. He himself was already a fore-front Conference man. He had entered the ministry in 1811, had attended almost every Conference since 1815; and, as is well known, had taken careful and copious notes of its discussions and its incidents.¹ He had known familiarly the notabilities of Methodism from the beginning of the centuries, and was replete with rich and racy recollections, "running over" in animated talk. Mr Young was one of the heroes of our West Indian Missions, and ranked amongst the most popular revivalists of the day. Mr Barton was a young minister of large and manifold capacity, of wide reading, and of the keenest interest in Methodist affairs. Their free discussion of the past and present was most instructive to a boy who had seen only the remote and rural aspects of the Work of God.

[¹ These notes were utilized by Dr Gregory in his *Sidelights on the Conflict of Modern Methodism*.]

"Heaven from all creatures hides the book of Fate." Could I have foreseen that in less than ten years' time I should have to take my turn in regular rotation with those two distinguished preachers, Mr Fowler and Mr Barton, in the pulpit of our largest London chapel, I must have been aghast.

Another pleasant Christmas party was at the house of Mr Simpson, father of the Rev. W. O. Simpson. The son was then a sturdy, well-behaved, pleasant little fellow, giving himself up with unselfish eagerness to the socialities of his fourth Christmas. The first time we met after his return from India, he told me that his recollection of that evening had been kept green in his soul by a little poem, written by me at that time for his sister's Album. That was the era of Albums; and photography had not yet come to the relief of the pen. It was a very serious penance for flirtation with the muse to be obliged to leave behind in return for hospitality some original composition, to be known and read of all future visitors. But there was no "begging off." Opportunely, however, my mind was in a rhyming cue through brooding over the poetry of Hannah More; and a little while before, my fancy had been ignited by the most magnificent *Aurora borealis* it ever was my happy hap to gaze upon.

One winter night Governor Morley sent us all out into the playground to witness this resplendent spectacle. From the horizon to the zenith the many-coloured streamers waved along the sky like triumphal banners of the heavenly host at some grand rendezvous. Now, in my Bible reading I had come upon the passage in the Song of Solomon: "Who is she that looketh forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, terrible as an army with banners?" and there seemed to me an inexplicable incongruity between the first three figures: "the morning," "the moon," and "the sun"—all bright *celestial* phenomena—and the earthly pageantry of "an army with banners." I had also seen that the meteorology of the north was especially impressive to the imagination of the inspired writers: "Fair weather cometh out of *the north*: with God is *terrible majesty*" (Job xxxvii. 22). Adam Clarke says that "the root" of the word rendered "fair weather" means "*resplendent*," and Dr Goode translates it "splendour." I had also read of the aerial prodigies which portended the destruction of Jerusalem. All this convinced me that "the Northern

Lights" were not altogether unknown in the latitude of Palestine, and were all the more imposing and awe-striking by reason of their rareness of recurrence. This I talked over with the future painter-poet Smetham, who much confirmed me in my notion. The result was that when my versifying vagrancy was suddenly brought into requisition, like a tramp impressed for a soldier, I produced the following stanzas. They are albuminous enough, made up of embryonic protein, and they claim a place here only as my first essay at exposition, and as expressing my conviction of the power and "the pleasantness of religion." I have not access to the original document, but quote my own copy, so there may be one or two verbal differences :—

"Who is she that looketh forth as the morning,
Fair as the moon,
Clear as the sun,
Terrible as an army with banners?

"Who is this beauteous maiden looking forth?
Fair as the lights that flush the flaming North,
Yet gentle as the morning's infant-ray,
When speckled twilight, black and white,
Comes forth proclaiming to the drowsy night
The swift approaches of the king of day.

"Who is she? 'Tis Religion: pitying Heaven
To enlighten man's dark mind her beams hath given;
Without her, all is cold, and dark and dead:
But where her beams are once allowed to shine
Sweet fruits of grace and flowers of Love Divine
On all around their heavenly fragrance shed.

"Though small and feeble is her opening day,
And though Sin, Death and Hell contest her way,
In vain they all oppose, in vain they rave,
Till, far too bright for mortal eyes to gaze,
And far too lofty for my little lays,
This glorious gift returns to Him who gave."

During this visit I formed another acquaintanceship, which has been to me a source of great enjoyment and advantage. The Right Honourable Henry Hartley Fowler,¹ who has rendered, is rendering, and we all trust will long be spared to render such

¹ Now Sir Henry Fowler, G.C.S.I.

shining and yet solid service to his country and his Church, was then the little master of the Brunswick preacher's house. He was a fluent, self-possessed little gentleman of four years old, who fixed a scrutinising, measure-taking gaze upon his interlocutor, following up an answer by a counter-question, altogether unembarrassed by the fear of man or boy. With him it was always *Question Time*, and his precocious parleying gave promise of debating power which has not been unfulfilled.

And *Robert Fowler*? Of all the Grove lads of my time he was the most reserved and reticent—the most inscrutable. But like some other boys of rich, though latent power, he took no interest whatever in his school-work; the only thing he seemed to take much pleasure in was some enterprise which required great daring, skill and secrecy. Though we were first-rate friends, yet I never could either get inside his shell, or draw him out of it. But when he left the Grove, and his profession was decided on, he forthwith developed the most indomitable application and most exceptional ability.

During this vacation I first saw a railway train in motion. It was on the Leeds and Selby Line, which was four years earlier than the London and Birmingham Line. Those to whom from infancy a steam-engine has been an object almost as familiar as a horse can have no idea of the effect, as of miracle or magic, produced by this strange spectacle on one who was in his teens before he saw it for the first time. The very passengers assumed an air of dignity, and received the cheers of the onlookers as if they were distinguished personages, borne in procession in triumphal cars.

The great physical benefit which I derived from these delightful holidays was, alas! undone by a book which I was induced to read soon after my return. This was Bishop Patrick's *Parable of the Pilgrims*, then published as the Third Part of *The Pilgrim's Progress*. This book had been, not indeed directly recommended to me, but unguardedly commended in my hearing. Bunyan's work had been to me of incalculable service; but the Anglican allegory, though containing, as Southey says, "sound instruction, felicitously expressed," has also a strong ascetic element altogether out of keeping with the spirit of the Gospel. Its praise of frequent fasting, as well as of a rigid daily regimen, induced upon me a fanaticism from which I suffer to this very day. Through

this book I became captivated with the charms of an ascetic life. It gave me the idea that not only stated and severe fasting, but daily self-restriction to as little food as possible, were indispensable to entire consecration and complete spiritual-mindedness. I began this course on Good Friday, 1835, neither eating nor drinking anything, either at breakfast-time or dinner-time, and at supper-time giving away half my portion both of bread and milk. To my astonishment and delight, I suffered from this no inconvenience whatever. But to my great disappointment, on repeating the experiment a few times, I became by dinner-time so faint and giddy as to be obliged to eat to enable me to get through my school-work. Henceforth I was compelled to content myself with going without breakfast once a week. But day by day I took too little to keep up in my system the necessary degree of vital heat; insomuch that I lay at nights sleepless and shivering with cold. I cannot but wonder at my being allowed to play such pranks with my poor physique. But the only intimation I received from any one of the authorities of the mischievous folly of the practice was one Sunday when the Governor found me sitting dinnerless, and gently remarked: "The primitive Christians never fasted on a Sunday." The only one who ever warned me of the inevitable penalty of these negative excesses was the lad who sat next to me at table, Tom Stoner, son of David, the Revivalist. He told me plainly that I was perpetrating a wrong on my digestive powers which could never be redressed. O, that I had heeded him! for he was right.

At this time also I re-read *The Imitation of Christ*, by Thomas à Kempis. I had read it five years before; but that was five years too soon. During my first vacation good old William Coultas, then Superintendent of the Belper Circuit, had presented me with an exquisite diamond edition of this famous Manual of Devotion, on condition that I would read it prayerfully; and the pledge was kept. But it had left so faint an impression on my mind that it came upon me with all the freshness of discovery. No book ever fascinated or impressed me more than this.

In 1835 I was blessed with a salutary extension of my physical area and horizon. There were few restrictions which we Grove lads chafed against so unsubmitively as confinement within the narrow acreage of our bald, hard-beaten playground.

But now I was frequently despatched with messages to one or other of the many ministers residing within reasonable walking distance, or to the shops or stalls of tradesmen on whom the establishment depended for its material supplies. I thus became familiar with that sinuous stretch of Airedale—far more lovely five and fifty years ago than now—through which the unstained river wound its way, so lingeringly and lovingly, before it faced the factories of Leeds. It was thus that I made my first acquaintance with Bradford: *Bra'fo'th*,¹ as the old man at Undercliffe called it, of whom I asked the way. It was then a compact and parkless country town, of not one-ninth its present population and extent: its "Lanes," such as Horton Lane, being still bordered "by hedge-row, elms and hillocks green"; and the old Parish Church, its only impressive public building, standing like a grim, gaunt sentry at the outskirts of the town.

At this time also Mr Brownell would take me out with him when he "went into the villages preaching the Word." This was to me a very great advantage, as his conversation was in a high degree improving and encouraging, he being in the manifest enjoyment of Perfect Love. I thus also became acquainted with some noteworthy Methodist families, and some phases of Methodism heretofore unknown to me. It was in this way that I gained an introduction to the charming homestead of Mr Mitchell of Esholt, father of Sir Henry Mitchell, who was then a tall, retiring boy. The father was the pillar of our little Church at Esholt, well fitted to support as well as ornament the sanctuary. Its chapter and coronal was the white lustre of benevolent old age. He was the Gaius of three Circuits, Yeadon, Woodhouse Grove and Shipley, from whom all preachers of the Word, both local and itinerant, were secure of hearty welcome. Of this delightful domicile another right companionable personage shortly afterwards became an inmate: Mr William Fison, soon to be well and widely known, not only for his own fine qualities, but also as the worthy partner of the now lamented and never-to-be-forgotten statesman, William Edward Forster. This "cottage near a wood" lent to its picturesque surroundings a simple spiritual beauty.

Much judgement should be exercised in the choice of books given to the young as prizes; for if a youth will prize any

¹ Wesley writes it *Bradfort* in a letter now in my possession.

book at all it must be his own prize ; and that is the book to which he will betake himself with the greatest interest. The two books awarded me after the examination of 1835 have been appreciably useful to me ever since. The first of these was a large library edition of Paley's *View of the Evidences of Christianity*. By this great work I was advanced, as by a royal posting service, another *stadium* of my progress in theology. Having learnt already from Locke, Leslie and Watson the *necessity* of a Divine Revelation, and the historic certainty of the Mosaic institutions, and also gained from Stackhouse's interesting *History of the Bible* an inkling of the trustworthiness of the Divine documents, I was now made to see through the pellucid *pebbles* of a great logical optician, not only the *credibility* of the witnesses to the life, death and resurrection of our Lord, but the utter incredibility of the opposite hypotheses.

My other prize : Maunder's *Treasury of Knowledge and Library of Reference*, also proved to be of present and of permanent utility, and to be not unworthy of its title. During the vacation of 1835, Paley was followed up by the work of another English classic : Addison's *Evidences of the Christian Religion*. Part of this I had read previously in the *Spectator*.

One day my father brought to me a book which he had hitherto kept under lock and key, as a luxury too luscious or too pungent for ordinary and promiscuous use, and only to be brought out occasionally as an appetising relish amidst more simple and substantial food. This was Secker's *Nonsuch Professor*. Of all pious punsters Secker is the chief. For devout witticisms and for godly whimsicalities, "the gleaming of the grapes of" Secker is "better than the vintage" of Thomas Fuller, Thomas Adams, and Dr South. He is the Thomas Hood of homiletics. His book is a crammed curiosity-shop, and yet it is almost as choke-full of wisdom as of wit.

During this vacation, too, I did a little sick-visiting amongst our humble neighbours, and found it not only good practice for my future pastoral work, but also richly remunerative in immediate edification ; everywhere meeting the warmest gratitude for spiritual consideration and attention. Another department of Christian work, to which I felt imperatively called, I found much more trying, but scarcely less repaying. This was the rebuking, or rather the remonstrating with, all who uttered profane language within my hearing, whether on

the coach or in the street. As I had no excess of physical nerve, this proved to be a veritable taking up the cross ; and such was the prevalence of the evil, that the cross had to be lifted "daily." And the *taking it up* was really the most arduous part of the inevitable task. For, strange to say, in but one instance did my expostulations call forth anything but shamefaced acknowledgment of the wrongness of the habit ; and in that instance I had unwittingly assumed a tone of harshness and an air of superiority.

Another cheering and surprising fact was the respect and even gratitude with which notoriously irreligious people, even though advanced in years, would listen to my pleadings with regard to their eternal interests. The octogenarian clock-mender who used to regulate and rectify the huge contemporary timepiece, which had one face without and another face within the school-room, was never seen inside a place of worship, except, in the exercise of his profession. From him I expected but a very curt and gruff reception, yet he inclined his hoary head to my juvenile expostulations with the gentlest deference. "Hey, lad," said he, "thah axes me varrah cloise queshtons !" To which when I replied : "I know, Mr Penny, it is a very great liberty for a boy like me to take with an old man like you, but I hope you will forgive me," the old man answered heartily : "Hey, lad ! I'se fa-an (delighted) to he-ar thah."

On my return journey to the Grove I had an interesting rencontre with a gentleman whose poetry had formed part of my early mental aliment.

Part of my vacations had always been spent amongst my friends at Heanor. At a point not far from this celebrated village I took coach for Leeds, and found myself seated next to a most animated personage, who forthwith began to question me as to my knowledge of the neighbourhood, and particularly of its families and its "characters," with which latter phenomena this part of Derbyshire was very rife. He evidently knew far more about the neighbourhood than I did ; yet seemed to be on eager outlook for any fresh particulars. This sort of thing was rather in my line, so I answered copiously and *con amore* ; for I was always collecting specimens of interesting varieties of human nature. He next interrogated me, with almost the precision of a special commissioner, as to the range and style of education at Woodhouse Grove ; and was evidently much

surprised at the extent and variety of the curriculum provided by a Methodist school, where the eldest boy must be under fifteen years of age.

When he had got all he cared for out of me, he changed his seat and began pumping someone else, taking advantage of every stoppage to vary his position and his interlocutor. On revisiting Heanor I found its reading population greatly interested in a recent work entitled *Rural Life in England*, written by a native of the village. On my narrating the adventure and describing my fellow-passenger and his mercurial mannerisms, my host exclaimed, "Why, that was William Howitt himself!"

In 1835 a new era dawned upon the Grove. The third head-master, with whose instructions I was favoured, came upon the stage—the Rev. Joshua Wood, B.A.¹ It was my great happiness to be brought into the closest contact with him, for, to adopt his somewhat Hibernian putting of the case, I was, as far as classics were concerned, "formed into a class by myself." He found that Horace had for me a special charm, and as this was also his own favourite classic, he asked why "we" should not read Horace right through from beginning to end. I had read two books under Mr Gardiner, and Francis' translation and notes, but now I had the inestimable advantage of studying carefully with a master of the most scholarly instinct the entire *Opera* of that most popular of all the classic poets. No one's literary education can be called complete who has not studied Horace thoroughly. His Odes, indeed, with few exceptions, such as *Qualem ministrum fulminis alitem*, had for me a far feebler fascination than his Satires and Epistles.

In Greek, I still went on with Homer; but the most resultful study was that of the perfection of an ethico-political romance, the *Cyropædia*. Mr Wood's instructions were enlivened by the richest anecdotes and the most humorous illustrations; thus I had in him an accomplished private tutor.

Another auspicious event which facilitated and furthered my mental progress at this time was the return to Woodhouse Grove, as youngest master, of my old school-friend, Benjamin Frankland, after some two years' absence. He resumed his former relations with me in the frankest and the heartiest way. Our bond of union had been a common love for English literature: Frankland having in his boyhood no taste whatever

¹ See p. 115.

for languages, his bent being towards physical science and mathematics. He had purposed to devote himself to some business or profession which might afford a proper sphere for his natural tastes and aptitudes ; but having failed to find a suitable position, he had changed his plan, and had chosen as his life-work that in which his ancestor, Richard Frankland, one of the most famous of the Nonconformist schoolmasters, had attained such eminence. He resolved to graduate at Dublin. He told me that since he left school he had done little but forget the classic authors in which he had taken such slight interest, and that he felt a craving for companionship in study. He made to me an overture of which the advantage was vastly on my side ; namely, that we should daily read over together the work which each had done the day before. The chief benefit to him would be the gaining of some idea of the Dublin style and theory of teaching, Mr Wood himself being a graduate of that University.

This arrangement, which continued after I too became a tutor, was to me great gain. I enjoyed a much wider range of classic reading than I could otherwise have compassed. True, it was, in some sort, second-hand ; but it was unworn, and had all the gloss upon it ; was, in fact, "as good as new," and was gained at less than half-price of dictionary-thumbing and of time. Frankland, the shyest, the most shrinking and the most self-distrustful nature I ever came in contact with, was perhaps on that account the more inclined to a single confidential friendship. He never seemed able to assure himself that he had really learnt a thing until he had said it through to some one else ; and to him it seemed full half the charm of friendship to share with another his amusement at his own weaknesses. No phrase of his was so frequent, in narrating his adventures and mishaps, as : "And I, *poor, gumptionless mortal*, must, of course—!" As he still kept up his studies in natural science, in chemistry especially, and talked over with me his Dublin course, he became a very important factor in my mental training during the ardent years of our co-tutorship. He had an exquisite sense of delicate beauty of expression, and would linger with voluptuous delight on Virgil's finer touches. He had also an intense appreciation of the biting salt of satire. Neither of us dreamed, as we paced together up and down the playground by the hour, or laid our heads

together in his little "box," partitioned off from "the top-bedroom," that we were destined to a still more lengthened colleagueship as the two Connexional Editors.

A cognate coincidence is also to my own mind very touching. At this time I became keenly conscious of the necessity to a preacher of the Gospel of a style as sound, as rich and as effective as careful cultivation could secure. I therefore proposed to Tom M'Nicoll that we should write essays on the same subjects, and each submit his composition to the other's criticism. It never occurred to either of us that two embryo editors were engaged in a fraternal contest. Thomas M'Nicoll was for several years the accomplished editor of the *London Quarterly Review*. He, however, attained a chastened grace of diction which he never could communicate to his imaginative school-fellow. We corresponded for some time after he left school.

My own school-days were swiftly closing in. Then came the everlasting, hard inquiry: "*What is to be done next?*" My father's Supernumeraryship compelled the acceptance of the first feasible opening; and a prosperous, generous draper, Mr Nuttall of Belper, afterwards of Ripley, and later still of Leamington, had shown his admiration of my father by offering me a place in his establishment without premium or indentures. To this I gratefully agreed.¹ But with regard to my future I was kept in perfect peace: the words were borne home to my mind with unspeakable preciousness and power: "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths."

Meanwhile the Governor began to treat me with marked consideration, repeatedly calling upon me to lead the devotions at family prayer. When I had entered on the last week of my sixth year at school, he called me into his study and informed me that the Committee had resolved, on his recommendation and that of the masters, to ask me to remain at school as a tutor. To this I thankfully assented. A few days later the fact was announced to the rest of the boys. The immediate effect was most amusing. The arrangement was unprecedented. More than sixteen years before, Mr Brownell,

[¹ The boy's original letter to his father on the subject shows that he did not much relish the suggestion.]

having left school at the vacation, returned as a master at its close ; but all the older boys had gone, and those of whom he took immediate charge had never known him as a school-boy. It would have vastly simplified the matter in my own case had my sixteen eldest school-fellows disappeared, and the seventeen youngest never known me in any other relation than that of tutor. But the change was instantaneous ; one night I sprang into my crib "Ben Gregory," and rose next morning "*Mr Gregory*." When the school-boy, George Noel Gordon Byron, suddenly became Lord Byron, he asked some one to tell him how a lad looks when one fine morning he wakes up to find himself a lord ! For myself, I knew not how to look, and none of my compeers could tell me.

What seemed most to disconcert my school-fellows was the change of address. James Smetham and I often laughed in later years about a little interview between himself and me which took place at this time. He came to me with all the mysterious importance of a deputation, the other lads looking on at a respectful distance, and put the following question, weighing every word with as much emphasis as it could bear, and leaving a pause between the words with a view to increased effect : "Ben !" "Yes, Jim" "*Do—you—reckon—that we—shall have to call you Mr Gregory ?*"

"Of course, you will, Jim ; and *think on you do* : because you see, I shall *be* Mr Gregory."

Whereat he lifted up his eyes and hands, as if the sky were in the very act of falling ; and yet with an unutterably grotesque expression, and went off the very picture of "Laughter holding both his sides."

The examination required in order to a junior mastership at Woodhouse Grove was conducted by Mr Galland and Mr Wood. No inquiry was made as to my notions of teaching, or my proposed methods of teaching. It was assumed that I should, of course, fall into the traditional track, and teach not only *what*, but *as* I had myself been taught. My investiture into this new dignity was simply the presentation with a cane, at that time the significant symbol and indispensable implement of schoolmastership, and the being conducted to a desk, around which were grouped ten wondering little preachers' sons, who were to form my special class.

One difficulty was met in a way most characteristic of one

of the finest men that Methodism has ever reared. The Governor finished his communication to me of the Committee's overture by informing me that I must wear a hat, and that Mr William Bunting, who wore a travelling cap in driving from Halifax to the Committee, brought a hat with him to wear on the grounds, which hat he had left behind. When written to as to how he would like it to be sent to him he answered that he had already bought another, and that I was quite welcome to the derelict beaver. "And," said the Governor, "it is a guinea hat!" This was the first of a long series of kindnesses received from Mr and Mrs William Bunting, stretching through a period of five and fifty years.

To teach little lads of eight or nine years was a light task compared with that which also came upon me daily: the keeping in good order a hundred boys, of whom a large proportion were but a few months my juniors. At breakfast time I was invariably left in charge of the entire school. In the evenings, too, as no lessons were heard, two masters only were on duty at a time, the elder of whom did not feel it incumbent on him to stick closely to his post. Besides, it was my nightly obligation to put quietly and orderly to roost in "the top-crib room" thirty-seven lively lads, some of whom were strongly inclined to be "rampaginous" and romping. I could not but be well aware of the difficulty of this task. But it was a real comfort to me that I had never sought the situation, that the responsibility had been laid upon me by the Providence of God, and therefore I might confidently appeal to Him for guidance and support. Moreover, Psalm xviii. 47 was blessedly "borne in upon" my mind: "*God . . . that subdueth the people unto me.*" I knew that He could keep down disaffection, and invest me with the required authority and influence. Another great advantage was a profound acquaintance with the peculiar natural history of the genus *Grove-boy*, and with its specific varieties as illustrated by every one of my late school-fellows. There was not a lad amongst them who had not been to me an object of most genuine interest, and of sometimes admiring, and still oftener of amused, observation and study.

On carefully considering the situation, I felt sure that but three per cent. would give me any serious trouble. The first of these was the only Grove boy who, in the course of my

twelve years' connection with the school, deserved the terrible description which Wesley gave of one of the Kingswood boys of his day. This impracticable boy was reared in the West Indies, in the debasing days of slavery; and the sub-tropical tint in his complexion, and his darkly handsome but un-English features, revealed a strong infusion of Romance blood in his swelling, quivering veins. He looked as if he had stepped out of the frontispiece to the famous French story of *Paul and Virginia*. Yet there was scant sentimentalism in his fiery composition. He had all the turbulence of his birth-place, "the still-vexed Bermoothes," and no little of the wild beauty of the poet Waller's *Summer Islands*. Of one thing I felt sure: this tameless youth will not submit to me without a struggle.

Another boy with whom I foresaw trouble had no worse fault than an apparently unconquerable aversion alike to learning and to law. My third difficulty was the biggest boy in the school. He, too, was a genuine West Indian, who, having been left to run wild on the estate of some wealthy relatives, planters, was precociously proficient in the vices alike of the slave-driver and the slave. He gloried in the prospect, in which he was not deceived, of coming into possession of a West Indian estate.

One day, as I walked reading by myself, Dick Aslin, a lad with whom I had had no close relations in the past, stole up to me and said: "I think it only fair, sir, that you should know that——" —the first-named of my three young difficulties—"is trying all he can to get up a plot against you; and, in fact, wants me to join it. He means, the next time you are left alone in charge of the whole school, to kick up a disturbance, and when you call him to order to 'set on.'"

"Thank you," said I.

Now I had been taught, both by observation and experience, that in a public school a thoroughly respected master and an incorrigibly saucy boy are mutually exclusive. The alternative is simple and inevitable: the boy must be broken in or turned out; or else the master must lose all self-respect and boy-respect, or forthwith give up a position for which he has shown himself unfit. No English school-boys will respect a master whom they think to be deficient in personal pluck. I also had a theory that every tutor worthy of the name and place must be "a terror to evildoers" as well as "a praise to

them that do well"; and that, as one of "the powers that be," he beareth not the cane "in vain." And, happily, the muscles of my arms had been developed in a way of which they knew not. In the little Supernumerary's cottage at Belper, in which every drop of water required for culinary, sanitary or other purposes had to be fetched from a well a good half-mile away. I contracted for the water supply of our humble homestead during the vacations. This little piece of duteous domestic service had made my "hands sufficient for me" on the present emergency. So when the young barbarian confronted me with thunderous visage, and put himself "in act to spring," by a succession of strokes, judiciously distributed and accurately timed, I kept his hands sufficiently pre-occupied, until he entertained us with a new version of the legendary piper's son, and *went roaring to his seat.*

This laughable and yet lugubrious collapse of the first attempt at *setting on* proved a lengthening of my tranquillity. That it did not shake the boy's own confidence in his corrector I had ample proof in after years. A like scene occurred in the top bedroom, the hero being the second-named of my "sweet young friends." The third, and the really formidable lad, came to terms in a much more amicable way, the first time it became my duty to remind him of his. After this I never had from any of the hundred boys a disrespectful act or word or look.

Having now much more time at my own disposal, I set to work systematically to acquaint myself thoroughly with the history, the doctrines and the essential principles and characteristics of Wesleyan-Methodism; and that, as far as possible, at first hand. This seemed to be absolutely incumbent on any one who expected to be called to pledge himself to, and to preach, those doctrines, to defend and diffuse those principles, and, in his own sphere and measure, to carry on consistently that holy and heroic history.

It is a curious fact that Wesley's chiefest popularity with us preachers' sons rested on his reputation as a wit and humorist. The then current anecdotes of Wesley, published or traditional, abounded with *bon-mots* and repartees, and shrewd, satiric sayings. Some of these became current coin amongst us, and circulated briskly on the playground and in lively dialogue; as *legal tender* in the commerce of discussion and of byplay. Divers of them served as authoritative axioms

in practical affairs. One of them consisted of the four monosyllables with which John Wesley put down obtrusive individualism in Conference, even in the person of his brother Charles. When the hymnist threatened to leave the Conference if something were permitted which jarred upon his own well-trained taste : "Mr Wesley said : '*Reach him his hat.*'" So, if in arranging, for example, for one of the great games, such as *push-battle*, in which every able-bodied boy was expected to take his part, any self-assertive urchin tried to get his own way by declaring that he would otherwise "have nothing to do with it," the prompt, decisive answer always came : "And Mr Wesley said : '*Reach him his hat.*'"

John Wesley, too, and his contemporary, the poet Gray (in his Letters to Mason), were the first English writers who showed a genuine feeling of the picturesque in English scenery, especially in the West Riding of Yorkshire.

All these genialities of Wesley's *Journals* had for me a potent and enduring charm. They made the pathway of the great itinerant evangelist to "bud and blossom as the rose" ; and the rod of the great religious ruler, like that of Aaron, when laid before the Lord in "the tabernacle of witness," which "brought forth buds, and bloomed blossoms, and yielded almonds." In the *Journals* Wesley's intellect

"Doth flourish like a mountain when its top
Is hid with flowering blossoms of a wood."

O ! good John Pawson, what account have you given of yourself for burning Wesley's annotated Shakespeare ?

Wesley, in his sermons, was my first preceptor, not only in Theology, but also in Moral and Mental Philosophy. Wesley was a close, clear, deep metaphysical thinker. As to the ultimate foundation of right, it was well for me that I had read Wesley's sermon on *The Original Nature, Property and Use of the Law* before I took up Butler's Sermons, Paley's or Chalmers' *Moral Philosophy*, Sewell's *Christian Morals*, or any other writers on the subject. The lesson I had learnt from Locke and Richard Watson as to the natural limitations of the human understanding was deepened by the words of Wesley. And I further learnt the irremediable ineptness as well as the inadequacy of all human language, even in its highest development and in the mouth of its greatest masters, and the

illusiveness of all human analogies and images, in dealing with or discussing the profoundest problems of mental or of moral science.

Having "shuffled off" the school-boy, I now for the first time joined an adult society-class. My class-mates were all of the very simplest sort, and their testimonies almost unvarying, though markedly individual. We met in the tailor's room, which was redolent with unsavoury scents of tailor's goose and young lads' clothes that were waxing old. Each member took stately his well-known seat: my own was between Billy Lister and a weaver from "the Bridge," named Roper.

As Billy held the place of honour, to the Leader's right, he was always questioned first. Billy was a character in his way, and a genuine Christian. He was the farm-labourer on the Grove estate, and was undersized both bodily and mentally, having the physique of a Laplander, with less than a Laplander's intelligence. In West Riding phrase, he was an "odd-come-short" specimen. How he got through his day's duties was a mystery. He could with difficulty lift his feet, and found it much easier to shuffle along, working his cramped legs by the aid of his shoulders, arms and trunk. Speech was to him a task and trouble, as he could hardly move his lower jaw. He never missed his class, although he had to haul himself up the steep stairs leading to the room, by a process pitiable to see, yet almost impossible to help. He was a great favourite with the lads by reason of his indomitable patience, and his gruff good humour, though the mischief-loving rogues would sometimes improvise a pantomime, when Billy "sluthered" into the dining-room to seek directions from the Governor as to his duties on the farm. Yet there was much to be learnt from Billy Lister, though his experience was almost invariable; especially the lesson, hard to learn, of profound humility and self-distrust. When questioned as to his growth in grace, his answer was: "*Well, as fur as Ih knaw my awn knaw—I 'ink I's gettin' a bit funder up int' t' counteree.*"

How often have I checked an overweening confidence in my own conceits by reminding myself of Billy's truly philosophical and Christian reservation: "As far as I know my own know." How often in wading through adventurous speculations in theology have I wished that the hardihood of assertion had been modified by Billy Lister's sage proviso.

Once only in five years did Billy make his class-mates start by an unlooked-for change of formula: "Well, as fur as Ih know my awn know, I 'ink I's gettin' a bit furdur up int' t' elements o' God."

On my right hand always sat the good weaver, Brother Roper, whose incessant refrain perforce suggested that his chief employment was to twine a cord around his own poor neck. He had but one confession, which he stuck to strenuously: "An' hoah! I know, 'at in a varrah bit o' time, t' plaace as nah knows meh 'ell know meh no mooer for ivver." Poor Brother Roper! "t' plaace" in the tailor's room 'at then knew him so familiarly would surely miss him when he went "up higher."

Whoever else might underrate or lightly miss the class-meeting, it was not one of the three who week by week sat side by side, for five successive years.

I have cause to remember with gratitude to them and to God my Senior Colleagues in the tutorship at Woodhouse Grove. Of our superb head-master I have already written; and some aspects of his noble nature, of his sound, yet fine religious sentiment, and of his solid Protestant theology are reflected in his tribute to his father's memory. As the second-master, the Rev. Elijah Jackson,¹ still survives, I may not say more of him, and I ought not to say less, than that he was an ideal colleague: a more unselfish, a more generous Christian spirit I have never met with. And I cannot conceive of one connected with whose name any word suggestive of littleness, narrowness, meanness or self-seeking would be a more direct contradiction in terms. The unpatronising pains he took to sustain my authority and enhance my influence were as constant and effective as they were sensitive and unofficial.

John Smetham was the third-master. James Smetham pictures, with a tender and truthful touch, "the loveliness and excellence" of his brother's "mind and character." Certainly *loveliness* was his leading feature, both of mind and character; though his intellect was, like his stature, tall and straight, and palm-like in its gracefulness. I may repeat here a few sentences from the testimony which I delivered on the first Sunday after his funeral: "If *he* is an Israelite indeed in

¹ Since deceased.

whom *there is no guile*, then was John Smetham of the true heart-circumcision. He had one of the best-balanced minds I ever came in contact with." There was an almost feminine refinement and delicacy in his countenance as well as in his character; and an almost feminine sweetness, softness and thrillingness in his clear melodious voice. He and his two brothers were the great humorists of the establishment; with the exception of another Grove lad, Dr Waddy, the most brilliant, felicitous and perennial I ever met with. Their puns were crystals, flawless, flashing and compact.

At this time John Smetham seemed to take no interest in religion, except in its aspects of sublimity and beauty. He lay "at the gate of the temple which is called Beautiful," apparently without either power or will to enter. But our common bookishness drew us together; and the fact that on the playground and at the night-school we were always "on duty" at the same time, perforce threw us together. And, as by consequence, we were always off duty at the same time, our leisure was coincident. His companionship was most charming, refining and uplifting. We talked over each other's reading, cleared up each other's difficulties, and criticised each other's compositions.

The fourth-master, W. S., was a bright, frank-hearted, laughter-loving and yet studious sprite, a great enlivener of our social moments. Benjamin Frankland was the fifth-master, I was the sixth.

We young masters set strenuously to work, jointly and severally, to attain the highest Christian culture we found within our reach.

And soon a tie of special tenderness and sacredness was formed between me and two of my *confrères*. When, in 1840, John Smetham and I appeared before the Leeds District Meeting as candidates for the ministry, the former, in giving an account of his conversion to God, stated that he had been led to religious decision and to a full surrender of his soul to Christ as his Saviour and his Sovereign through the influence of his friend who then stood by his side; and, in 1867, when Frankland and myself were elected into the Legal Conference, Frankland made the like statement with regard to himself.

Not long after becoming a "master" I had an amusing adventure which might have proved severely disconcerting.

One day, at noon, I said to my friend Aslin: "Dick, let's have a run to Rawdon Wood; we can get there and back in half-an-hour, and be in time for dinner." So off we bounded at full speed, vaulting over rails and walls. Now, in Rawdon Wood, at that period of the year, there was a profusion of wild raspberries, such as I have never seen elsewhere; I should think acres of them. On these we fell to browsing with such appreciation that we took no note of the approaching dinner-time. Suddenly the dinner-call boomed across the valley. Aghast! I cried to Aslin: "Dick, what is to become of me? I have to serve the 'prouts'!" (potatoes). Dick cast on me a sympathetic and confidential glance, which seemed expressive of the Miltonic lines:—

"I know each dell,
Dingle and bosky bourn of this wild wood."

So off we struck in the direction of the sound, through a part of the wood which was to me a *terra incognita*. Suddenly I heard a rush behind me as if I had detached a mass of stone upon the slope, and before I could turn round I felt a strong grip upon my shoulder. A stalwart ranger had me in his grasp. "What's thee doing here?" said a gruff, stern voice. "O! please don't stop us!" I exclaimed. "Don't you hear that bell? That's the Grove dinner-bell. You'll get us into a terrible scrape." "What? dost thee come fro' t' Grooave! If they te-ach theh no better nor this, *leave* it!" "O!" said I, drawing myself up, "I'm a master." Whereat the grim game-keeper held me at arm's length, and eyed me up and down, as an unimagined specimen. "*Thee* a mester!" he protested. "Thee a *mester*! A pratty fellow thah art to be a mester! I'll tek thee off to 'O'sfo'th 'All (Horsforth Hall, the residence of the nearest magistrate: a gentleman to whom I had not yet gained the honour of an introduction). "An' h'll send thee straight to Wakefield" (House of Correction). But after giving me a sound shaking, almost lifting me off my feet, he yielded to my appeal to the Governor as a Court of first instance; and I escaped the clutches of the law. Unheedful of the notice, *Trespassers will be prosecuted*, I had unwittingly plunged into some game-preserves.

My mind received a mighty impulse from a work which had been recently published: *The Memoirs of Dr Adam Clarke*,

edited by his son, in three volumes. To one who meditates the ministry of the Gospel amongst the people called Methodists, there could scarcely be a more variously and healthily stimulating book than this, especially the first two volumes. Here is a man with a genuine Methodist experience as his base of operations; and as his central motive force, an energy, grace-generated, struggling for expansion, and bearing him along with a sustained and steady impetus. Here you have a purely simple-minded, hero-hearted evangelist, whose whole soul is set to the marching music of the hymn:—

“Saviour of men! Thy searching eye,
Doth all my inmost thoughts descry;
Doth aught on earth my wishes raise,
Or the world’s pleasure, or its praise?”

“The love of Christ doth me constrain
To seek the wandering souls of men;
With cries, entreaties, tears, to save,
To snatch them from the gaping grave.”

Here you have a plodding pastor, shepherding the flock, by day and night, feeding them with knowledge and understanding; yet withal an indomitable student, and a scholar of immense and manifold attainments, content “To scorn delights, and live laborious days”; and devoting all his acquisitions to the elucidation of the Word and Works of God. Of course the autobiographical portion of the book is vastly its most engrossing and instructive element.

When the Duke of Sussex came to City Road Chapel to hear Dr Clarke, the Morleys sat in a pew immediately behind that selected for His Royal Highness. The Duke evidently did not share the oft-expressed objection of his learned friend to conversation in the House of Prayer. He set the good example of being in his place some minutes before the opening of the service, and utilized the interval by inspecting the hymn-book which was placed in his hands. Opening on the section headed, *For Believers Fighting*, he turned to a gentleman who accompanied him, and pointing this out to him, observed: “You see, they are not like the Quakers; they do allow their people to *fight*!”¹ When Dr Clarke gave out the hymn: *For the King*, the Duke turned to his companion and said: “See, it’s

¹ As spurious versions of this incident are afloat, we give the original testimony.

in the book ; it's not just brought in for the occasion ; here it is already."

It was a great pleasure to me to be able to recall with vividness and minuteness the personal appearance of Adam Clarke. When the Grove boys were admitted into the Leeds Conference of 1830, and ranged in front of the gallery, I was so happily placed as to command the platform. Before the addresses to the preachers' sons were delivered, it was announced that the Committee for drawing up the Resolutions against negro slavery in the British dominions must meet during "the Open Session." Foremost among the names of the members of this Committee was Dr Adam Clarke. Thereupon up rose a figure that could not possibly be mistaken, if only by reason of the "purple tinge" of his sea-blue drapery. He stood facing me for some minutes, carefully collecting and sorting a number of papers which lay upon the desk before him. When, six years afterwards, I read of his surpassing skill in scrutinising and collating MSS., I could not but recall his critical and searching look as he stood amongst his peers in Brunswick chapel, and held up to the light, and "sought out and set in order" a pile of seemingly important documents. That was not an unimportant moment in Methodist history. Dr Clarke communicated the Resolutions to Wilberforce, whose grateful and most beautifully characteristic reply is given in the *Life of Adam Clarke* by his daughter. These Resolutions were followed up by petitions to both Houses of Parliament, "from every Society and congregation in the United Kingdom, signed by at least a million of names of honest men." So, for every individual slave there was at least one Methodist appellant. Few men have earned a stronger right to put on "the purple" than had Dr Clarke, whose character was still greater than his scholarship or his services.

At this time Dr Clarke would be in his seventy-first year, and had but two years more to live on earth. He looked elderly, but not at all infirm. He was slightly above the middle height, well-shaped, and strongly built, and in good condition. His features were not nearly so striking as those of many of his brethren.

To feed and fan the flame of holy zeal, I read the *Memoirs of David Stoner* ; Treffry's *Life of John Smith* ; and, through

the commendation of Wesley and of Clarke, *The Life of David Brainerd*. These books inspired me with a restless longing for the salvation of souls. I seized every opportunity of exhorting individual sinners to return to God. My first attempt upon the outside world was not at all encouraging. I began with the hedger and ditcher on the Grove estate. He was a sober, industrious, steady-going hind; but not the most self-sufficing scientific sceptic, or the best-constituted, best-circumstanced and most successful man of the world, of letters, or of politics could be more indifferent and insensible to the future life or the spiritual universe than was this wielder of the bill-hook and the spade. Yet he, too, had his crude hypothesis of evolution: when pressed about the safety of his soul after death, he answered: "O, I reckon I braed of a horse-soul" (am of the same *breed* as a horse). When appealed to in the interests of his numerous children, he only answered: "O, theyah mun tak' thur chonce, like all t'rest!" What a contrast to his fellow-servant, Billy Lister! However, I had reason to hope that by degrees he began to take some interest in spiritual and eternal things. In any case, he made a very good chapel-keeper a few years later.

In other cases, I was blessed with more speedy and more encouraging success. My first prize was a young farmer's son named Hindle, whom I had the happiness of winning for Christ, and then cheering on his way "through the valley of the shadow of death."

Another book which at this time powerfully affected me was Jackson's *Memoirs of Richard Watson*. Watson's Memoirs by his friend followed Clarke's Memoirs by his son, after a few months' interval; as the funeral drapery for Adam Clarke had scarcely been removed from the City Road pulpit when it was replaced in honour of the lamented Richard Watson. Of Watson I had even a closer and a longer view than of his great compeer. He paid a flying visit to the Grove during school hours, and looked in upon the lads. At this time the class of which his nephew, John Henshaw, and myself were members was in a separate class-room, and for years we managed to sit side by side. Watson came in to speak to his nephew, and was moved to give an impromptu address, which overflowed with earnestness and tenderness. At the close of this he stretched out his hands and gave us his patriarchal

blessing. I was so near to the great man, and was so affected and impressed that his invocation fell upon me with all the weight and the directness of a personal benediction ; and I have ever since felt it a distinction and a happiness to have bowed my head beneath Richard Watson's blessing.

"Richard Watson stood six feet two inches. He was very thin. His forehead was immense, but exquisitely moulded ; and as if elaborately modelled. His eyes were dark and flashing. His long shapely cogitative nose gave a Grecian cast to a face strongly expressive of his genius and his character, and was 'sickled o'er with the pale cast of thought.' His voice was deep, musical, mellow and well modulated. He was the most impressive object I ever gazed upon. Byron's description of the Coliseum at Rome portrays in one line the great Richard Watson as he was two years and a half before his death :—

'Simple, erect, august, severe, sublime.'

He was not yet fifty years of age when I saw him, but he looked almost as old as did Clarke at seventy. His fatal disease had already given to his complexion a strong sallow stain, and to his majestic countenance a subdued and suffering look.

At this time another sore bereavement fell upon me. My sister Esther, then thirteen years of age, was struck with death whilst sitting at the tea-table, and in less than a quarter of an hour had breathed her last. From infancy she had been strangely thoughtful, gentle and devout ; and during the vacation of 1835 I had been deeply impressed with her rapidly ripened spiritual intelligence, her heavenly-mindedness, and her activity in the work of the Lord. From the moment of her seizure she knew that she was dying : and, surely, never has death been more gloriously swallowed up in victory. She exclaimed : "O, this *is nice dying* !" And, then, fixing her eyes upwards, as if she saw the Redeemer coming to receive her, she cried :—

"Yea, Amen ! let all adore Thee,
High on Thy eternal throne ;
Saviour, take the power and glory,
Claim the kingdom for Thine own ;
Jah ! Jehovah !
Everlasting God, come down !"

These were her last words. Beautiful association of the Second Advent with Christ's reception of the individual believer to Himself!

I cherish a duteous and grateful sensitiveness to the just reputation of those thinkers to whose works I owe so much, yet whom it has become the fashion, one might almost say the passion, to disparage and discard. Richard Watson's *Memoirs* naturally awoke an eager interest in Richard Watson's Works. I began with his *Theological Institutes*; and thus set forth on the systematic study of systematic theology. It was not indeed my first excursion into this grandest, most inviting, most enduring, most enriching of the sciences. On my father's book-shelves stood a winsome row of dumpy duodecimos, entitled: *Dwight's Theology*. They were companionable little volumes, being a popular as well as a portable form of Christian divinity, cast in the homiletic mould. To my school-boy fancy, the writer's monosyllabic name might have been shortened by three letters: *Dwts.* would have well described the pennyweights in which its golden maxims were dealt out. But I grew weary of its prim proprieties of style, with no more refreshing variety than the well-rolled gravel walks, the soft, smooth-shaven turf, and stiff and close-cropped hedge-rows of some old Dutch parterre. Besides, its Calvinism was distasteful, although it was a moderated and modified edition of the system of Dwight's sturdy grandsire, Jonathan Edwards.

Watson's work is on a higher plane and on a grander scale. It can scarcely, however, be regarded as strictly scientific in its method. It does not even choose the scientific starting point. Theology—being fundamentally *the Science of God*—should, surely, begin by ascertaining in what way the human intellect *came by* at first, and still comes by, the *idea* of God. The conviction which I derived from Wesley's *Sermons*, and the Third Part of the Conference Catechism, that the idea of God is not innate, but is a self-authenticating revelation, coming, in the first instance, from God Himself, and preserved by record, oral instruction, and the Spirit's influence, my own personal experience, and all my subsequent reading and reflection, have but tended to confirm.

From Watson's *Institutes* the step was easy to Paley's *Natural Theology*. If only as a specimen of clear, strong, simple English, and of apt and homely illustration, it well repays a careful study.

To me it was delightful. I had a dear little pocket edition. As a piece of theological argumentation it is very far from being out of date; and its reasoning is much rather confirmed than discredited by the desperate determination of atheistic and materialistic scientists to clear it out of their way.

In any case, if it be contended that these infinitely wise "contrivances" and "adaptations" of a Wisdom immeasurably transcending the uttermost capacity of man, are after all but "coincidences" between organism and environment, do they not demonstrate the common authorship of environment and organism? And this would but change Paley's line in his *Natural Theology* to that of his *Horæ Paulinæ*; the next work of that robust reasoner which I was led to take in hand. Its charm was even greater than that of his *Natural Theology*.

For spiritual edification I resorted at this time to a very remarkable tractate: *A Treatise of Christian Prudence: Extracted from Mr Norris, by John Wesley, A.M.* I was drawn to it partly by its title, as promising instruction of which I deeply felt the need, and partly from the fact that Wesley thought it worth his while to re-edit and republish it. Methodists should not lightly forget their indebtedness to Norris. With the exception of his *Collection of Forms of Prayer for Every Day in the Week*, his abridgment of Norris' *Treatise of Christian Prudence* was the first of all John Wesley's multitudinous publications, being issued so early as 1734, a year before he went to Georgia, five years before the formation of the first Methodist Society in London. It strikes the keynote of Wesley's life from that time onward: *Entire and absolute devotedness to God as the only solid and abiding happiness of man.* That he retained his early estimate of this literary and spiritual gem is proved by his publishing several subsequent editions, the last in 1784, just half a century after the first. He also included it in his *Christian Library*. It is, indeed, an admirable production, as to both style and substance. His style is a study; demonstrating that the scholarly and the vernacular, the idiomatic and the classical are capable of the freest and most facile combination. If delivered as a series of sermons from such a text as: *I have believed in thy Commandments,*" it would have been equally appropriate from the pulpit of St Mary's, Oxford, or those of the Somersetshire or Wiltshire villages of which Dr Norris was successively rector.

Resolving ourselves into a Mutual Improvement Society, we Grove masters read a course of essays in the masters' room, criticising each other's composition in a frank and most genial fashion. We chose for subject: *Learning as a Help or a Hindrance to Religion*. I made so poorly out as to disappoint my colleagues sorely, and myself worst of all. This awoke me to the necessity of studying composition as an art before attempting to address the public. Whately's *Elements of Rhetoric* had not yet come in my way; so, for the present, I had to content myself with Blair's *Rhetoric and Belles Lettres*, three volumes; which, *in the meantime*, were of great service; and especially his twenty-nine chapters on pulpit eloquence, which, unhappily, he mistakes for preaching.

From Blair I went on to Burke's essay on *The Sublime and Beautiful*. Here, again, it was the title which attracted me, and the fame of its author as the most superb orator and writer of the last century. Yet I was not at all disappointed to find it: *A Philosophical Inquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*. This book, too, seems to be injuriously underrated at the present day. It was both thought-awakening and imagination-stirring. My own notion is that the chief element in our feeling of sublimity is an awe-inspiring *loftiness, vastness or immensity*; whilst that of Beauty is exquisite *fittingness or harmony*. The original, etymologic meaning of *sublime* is unquestionably *loftiness*, as expressed by Isaiah, and his description of the throne of God in His Temple: "*High and lifted up*"; and an element of fearfulness much enhances its impression; though, surely, Burke is wrong in making fear and pain the radical conception.

In May, 1837, I made my first missionary speech at *Tagg Hill*, a populous suburb of Heanor. As I was then sixteen years and six months old, the Belper superintendent, the fatherly James Brooke (whose sons were under my care at Woodhouse Grove), persuaded me to second a resolution. Before the meeting I took tea at the house of a man well worthy of commemoration: Mr Joshua Mather, father-in-law of the invaluable Mr Strange, for more than half a century in the employment of our Book Room. Joshua Mather was a genuine, healthy, happy Methodist. His face was calmly radiant with benevolence and blessedness.

James Hamilton spoke of "the perpetual doxology of Fletcher's countenance." Joshua Mather's countenance was a perpetual benediction, and a perpetual proclamation of the pleasantness of religion. His favourite quotation was: "O that my every breath were praise!" and his most characteristic exclamation in the pulpit: "O dear! O dear! if we *could* but *believe*!" His popularity and activity as a local preacher, and the peripatetic nature of his business, made him a familiar figure through a considerable area; and wherever he came, his presence made sunshine. He was moreover a great singer, and had a remarkable contralto voice. I met with a striking testimony to the character he bore amongst the populace. I happened to be at Heanor on the Monday of the *Wakes-week*—at that date—a day devoted to drunkenness. As my father and I were passing the principal inn of the village, a rout of tipsy colliers staggered out. One of them pointed to my father, and said in broadest Derbyshire: "I honly knaw tu good men i' aw this wo'ld: and that's wun on 'em, and Jozua Mather's t'other!" My father, as was his wont, stopped to make some use of the good impression he seemed to have made upon an irreligious man, and asked him whether he was not afraid of offending God by neglecting the religion he admired in others. With a strange mixture of "modern" notions of God and mediæval notions of the devil, he answered: "O! no, I fears God none; I *luv* Him, I *luv* Him!" looking upwards as if in a theosophic ecstasy. "It's that *tother*, I'se afeared on!" pointing downwards—a survival of the demonology of the Dark Ages, when "*That Other*" was a common designation of the devil.

Another incident which made the meeting memorable to me was a remarkable impromptu theological deliverance from my venerated father. Mr Roscoe, the worthy Independent minister of the neighbouring village, Marlpool, expressed the same dark view of the unsalvability of any heathen, which was afterwards so eloquently maintained by the light-hearted Dr Richard Winter Hamilton in his Prize Essay on Missions. Now this went quite against the grain of my father's truly Wesleyan theology. In the most dispassionate and respectful and yet the most convincing way, he pointed out the injustice, to both God and man, of applying to the unevangelised passages addressed to the evangelised, and putting in the same

condition neglecters of the Gospel and those who had never heard it. He showed that we know, from Christ Himself and His Apostles, that the heathen do not lie beyond the range of the Fatherhood of God and of His kind and beneficent Providence ; that they are partakers in the redemptive relationship of the Second Adam to the human race ; that they are not beyond the purpose and sufficiency of His redeeming work ; that they are not beyond the range of the Holy Spirit's action ; that they will be judged individually by their own degree of light, and not by ours ; and that we are neither called nor competent to pronounce upon their eternal destiny *in the bulk*. He showed that the commission of the Church is, not to create these gracious relationships, but to announce them ; and that the *actual known* spiritual and moral condition of the heathen was an imperative summons to their help ; that our work is to take to them the Divinely authenticated and recorded standard of duty to God and man ; to point them to the One true and all-sufficient Sacrifice for sin ; to teach them to worship the Father in spirit and in truth ; and to make apparent unto them "the grace of God which bringeth" unto all who accept it—a present, full, free and felt "salvation" ; so that they shall no longer have before them an unillumined and unenlivened eternity, but a hope full of immortality. It was a wonderful deliverance ; and being purely spontaneous, it tended to account for and to strengthen my father's reputation as a master in theology.

I was called up next to make my maiden speech. It was no easy task, in the state of mental tension and subdued yet strong emotion to which my father had wrought up the meeting. The capital expedient of singing a verse was not then in vogue ; so I hit upon a pleasantry which at once put me *en rapport* with my audience. A foregoing speaker had described the wonder with which some "natives" had, for the first time, watched the movement of a carriage with a large wheel in front and a little wheel behind ; and when they saw that the little wheel, though it did not overtake the big one, yet followed steadily and closely in its track, not allowing the original distance to increase, they clapped their hands, and shouted : "*Well done, little wheel !*" So, all they could fairly expect of me was, not to overtake my father, but to follow steadily and closely in his track. "*Well dun, little wheil !*"

pealed out a chorus of collier voices. This put me at my ease, and thus originated Gervase Smith's favourite congratulation whenever I had a good time: "Well dun, little wheil!"

The state of mental and spiritual tension so strenuously maintained began to tell seriously on my digestive powers. Besides, the sudden change in the conditions of life was even more trying than the unexpected access of virile responsibilities whilst the bodily stature was yet incomplete, and the constitution still *unset*. To have, all at once, four meals a day instead of three, and two hours and a half less of bed at nights, was a severe test to the power of adjustment of a frail physique which had not yet reached its sixteenth birthday. As the youngest master had the entire control of a hundred boys at breakfast time, his own breakfast could not be a very tranquil, leisurely repast; and as the four youngest masters had to divide the dinner-time between them, the chief meal of the day must be despatched in about a quarter of an hour. At that time supper was an honoured institution at the Grove, affording the best, almost the only, opportunity of free and home-like intercourse between the younger masters and the family; and as the house was scarcely ever without some interesting guests, the viands were both substantial and profuse.

At the same time, by a strange inversion of the natural order of things, "the power of the keys" was delegated to the youngest member of the tutorial staff; whose duty it was to lock all the outside doors at ten o'clock precisely, and report "all safe" to the Governor, and every morning, at five o'clock in summer and at six in winter, to receive them from the Governor again, in order to ring the boys up to be ready for their morning work. Thus, after being accustomed from infancy to go to bed at half-past eight, I now seldom settled down till close upon eleven. This allowed me, in summer, Wesley's modicum of six hours in bed, which winter compassionately lengthened into seven. To aggravate all this, when I began to be conscious of an overwhelming languor, I was wont to throw it off by violent running and vaulting. The result was inevitable: symptoms of dyspeptic decline gained rapidly upon me. My stomach utterly rejected animal food and cold milk; till, at last, a draught of cold water seemed, for a time, almost to stop the action of the heart. My own feeling was that the ministerial course to which I had looked forward

was accomplished by my labours amongst my school-fellows, pupils, co-tutors and neighbours. I wrote to my sister Sarah a Farewell Ode, on the words: "Jesus saith unto her, Thy brother shall rise again. Martha saith unto Him, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day." I give the closing verse:—

"Yes, I shall be 'thy brother' still;
Not death *that* tie can sever;
And thou, who art my sister now,
Shalt be the same for ever."

I also wrote a little lay on Psalm lxxxix. 47: "Remember how short my time is: wherefore hast Thou made all men in vain?" It was suggested by a real spectacle, and is a piece of Pauline pessimism, the keynote being: "If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable":—

"This world is like a church-yard scene
On village holiday:
Wide o'er the undulating green,
The giddy urchins stray.

"*This* leaps across his grandsire's tomb,
Gaily as 'twere another's;
That ravishes the daisy's bloom
From his forgotten mother's.

"One chalks grim faces on the stone
That marks his sister's sleep;
And now, behind it, sly and lone,
Is playing at bo-peep.

"*This* wrestles sturdily hard by
His baby-brother's grave;
Near the cold spot where soon he'll lie
Another boxes brave.

"Earth is a verdant burial-ground,
Where mortals play and rot;
Or laughing loud, or sleeping sound;
Forgetting, or forgot.

"If this be our whole history,
Be happy—he who can!
Come, kind Despair, and comfort *me*.
Creator! What is Man?"

My first alarming attack occurred in Derby. I had walked the eight miles from Belper on a blazing afternoon, to see my old master, Mr Brownell, then stationed in that town. I found him just about to start for Normanton, a village some three miles distant from his house. He asked me whether I was too tired to go with him; "for," said he, "I want you to see the finest specimen of an old Methodist lady I have ever met with. She is eighty-four years old, and as hale and bright as if she were only forty-eight. She has heard all the grand old preachers, and entertained a great many of them; and she says that there was not one of them that could preach like your father, whom she often heard before he went out to travel." This was irresistible; so off we went. And I was well repaid. *Mrs Peach* was worthy of her name: round, rosy, and with a rich autumnal bloom upon her cheeks. But in her hearty hospitality she gave me a bowl of milk fresh from the cow: which, being over-heated and exhausted, I quaffed with eagerness.

That night I had my first experience of an extreme nervous torture: not only sleeplessness, but a hideous recoil from sleep. I felt that if I once fell asleep I should never wake again. Dr Bunting used to tell of a cognate and yet contrasted result from the self-same cause. He had walked to a distant country appointment on an extremely hot day, and before preaching had drunk a bowl of delicious new milk. He declared that whilst conducting the subsequent service he was fast asleep. No doubt, when the great preacher came down from the pulpit, he had all the feeling of a man who had woke up from a profound somnolence; so abnormal was the state of brain and nerves into which that draught of milk had thrown him when in a condition of over-heated exhaustion.

On the morning after my involuntary vigils, as I was walking in the street with my old master, I was suddenly attacked with deathly faintness, and was with difficulty taken to the house of the nearest surgeon, a famous Derby Methodist. For some time I was supposed to be dying, and felt as if I were. And, O! how sweet to the gasping young believer was the last couplet of the age-worn hymnist:—

"O could I catch one smile from Thee,
And drop into eternity!"

But strong restoratives, and the skill of three experienced

doctors, were at length successful. But from that day to this, I have been subject to the like attacks, whenever my health has sunk below a certain point.

I was mercifully delivered, in the meantime, from the depression of spirits incident to aggravated indigestion by the sharp alternative of *tic*: not unlike the choice between the dagger and the poison-cup, which the vignette in Pinnock's Goldsmith's England for ever forced upon Fair Rosamond. I have tried both, and much prefer the dagger. Yet *tic* is a veritable Torquemada, and evidently thought me a fine subject.

Mrs Morley, herself a martyr to dyspepsia, showed all the wondrous kindness of a tender fellow-feeling. With what mitigations did she ply me! such as half a cupful of mustard-seed, taken twice a day. But she assured me that indigestion takes a long time in worrying its victim before it kills. One day she gave me a tragi-comic illustration of this fact in her own immediate case. With her the disease sometimes took the acute form of spasms. She said: "Last night I had one of my worst attacks. I rolled on that hearth-rug, writhing in agony, and crying: 'O! I must die! I *am* dying!'" And, what do you think was all the comfort I could get from Mr Morley? He quietly lifted me up and laid me on a sofa, and just said, in his own decided, placid way: '*You told me so thirty years ago!*'" I fear that I reflected her own look of pantomimic pathos as she made this pitiful recital. Fifty-five years of it have convinced me that the tender mercies of dyspepsia are as cruel as those of a North American savage, who will not give his captive the blow of grace until he has first tested his susceptibility of torture. That blow of grace, however, had nearly come to me through a fierce attack of influenza, during its invasion of this country in 1837.

Nevertheless, I kept working on. My second appearance on a missionary platform was at Undercliffe, a mile from Bradford. John Smetham was engaged to make his maiden speech at that meeting, and before we started for the village he came to me with his incorrigible humour, and said: "Look here, Greg, I've made up my mind to be popular the *first* time I speak at any rate; so I'll tell you what we'll do. We'll go to the Governor, hat in hand, and impress upon him the extreme

importance of imbuing preachers' sons with the missionary spirit. The kind old ex-missionary secretary will take the bait at once. Then we'll pick out the dozen noisiest and most irrepressible lads; and they'll be so delighted with the walk and the meeting instead of night-school, that they'll cheer us both like mad; particularly if we should seem to be sticking fast; and that will give us time to recover." The good old Governor gave Smetham leave to select the boys. Unhappily, that occurred which we ought to have foreseen: the rascals "encumbered us with help"; and they so over-acted their part that it was with great difficulty that we could be heard at all. Little Jemmy M'Nicol shouted, clapped and stamped so wildly that a good brother who occupied the pew behind him, seized him by the collar, and exclaimed: "If thah dusn't 'od thy din, I'll ding thy yead ageean t' pew-back."

At this period, during a vacation, I heard two sermons from one of the ablest and yet most singular preachers which Methodism ever produced: the then famous Daniel Chapman. The occasion was one of the most popular anniversaries in the district: that of Belper Pottery Sunday School. Belper had been Chapman's first circuit, where, though greatly admired by the more cultivated members of his flock, yet his common speech required to be translated before it could be "understood of the people." Yet he was originally one of themselves, having been a working cutler in Sheffield, who, in his early teens, sprung up into distinction in a night by confronting and confounding Carlisle, the most popular infidel lecturer of the day. He had a remarkable physique, suggestive of what no word so well expresses as *high-bred*. The politest of men and the most manneristic of speakers, he was the most reckless of conventionalisms in dress. He both prayed and preached in paragraphs; always beginning his supplications and his sermons with a pile of affirmations and corresponding negations, such as: "Thou art a Being immaculately holy; Thou art a Being infinitely perfect," etc.; or, "Religion is *not*, or the Bible is not—this, that and the other"; followed by: "Religion *is*—or the Bible is," etc. He wore neither neckerchief, nor stock, nor yet the semblance of a collar; but allowed nature to provide her own protection and adornment.

His afternoon text was: "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people." Although

the congregation was made up mainly of potters and their wives and children, he submitted to their scholarship his emendation of the Authorised Version : " A people by especial contract," rolling out the Greek : "*Laos eis peripoiesin*," with an unction and an energy which would have evoked from a Yeadon congregation an ecstatic outburst : " Ay, *that's it*; glory ! " But, on a hot and festive afternoon, when the hearers had enjoyed the only dinner of the week with their wives and families, he was a barbarian unto the people, though they were otherwise to him.

The sermon in the evening was a totally different kind. The text was : " Therefore I say unto you, what things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them. And when ye stand praying, forgive, if we have aught against any," etc. That sermon still seems to me the most judicious, discriminating practical discourse I ever listened to. Those were the days of " the Derby Faith " ; and, without alluding to the controversy, the preacher dealt right deftly and manfully with all the mental and experimental difficulties of the question ; pointing out, in the clearest and most satisfying way, the conditions of effective prayer, and the perfect consistency of a presently realising faith with a delayed yet assured good. In that memorable preaching, heart answered to heart as face to face in a glass. After the first few passages his English ran as clear and as straightforward as the onward-bearing Derwent. He faced the facts of Christian consciousness, and dealt with them in the most sober-minded, well-considered way. His remarks were intensely realistic ; and he set forth without technicality, yet with impact and precision, the true Scripture-doctrine of believing prayer.

Mr Chapman sometimes startled his hearers upon great occasions by the most unlooked-for texts. The opening of Brunswick chapel in his native town drew pedestrian Methodists from a radius of full thirty miles, even from as far as Newark ; for the two greatest preachers of the time were announced for the morning and the evening services, and the young Sheffield prodigy for the afternoon. What was the astonishment of the excited crowd when Mr Chapman read out as his basis of discourse, Leviticus xiii. 3 : " It is the plague of leprosy."

Unhappily, Mr Chapman's writings give no adequate idea of his genius.

In the autumn of 1836 I received a powerful intellectual impulse from an address delivered in the school-room at Woodhouse Grove by the first distinguished American I ever saw, Dr Wilbur Fisk, first President of the Wesleyan University in the United States. He was one of the most enthusiastic and successful educators of his time; and beyond compare, the most graceful speaker in both language and elocution I had yet listened to. He was in middle life—forty-four years old; he was tall and well-proportioned, with a winning though commanding countenance; with beaming eyes, and a bland yet benignant look. His voice was musical, and modulated with the finest taste and feeling. As he had been trained for the bar, his eloquence was forensic in its conciliatoriness. He stood before us as the evangelist of Christian culture. Mr Wood, though America was his aversion, was almost entranced. "We sat rapt." He had evidently that love and deference for the young which secures free access to their hearts. He appealed to us, as if we were rather Gentlemen of the Jury, than a lot of raw lads and tutors in their teens. Fisk was a fine specimen of that persuasive rhetoric and that nice sense of suitability in which Americans so much excel.

To Mr Wood's exclamation: "Ah! then, Mr Gregory, and isn't *that* an *elegant* man, now?"¹ I replied: "Sir, I have read a good deal of what seemed to me to be elegant writing, but I had no idea till to-day what elegant *speaking* would be like."

The speech of Dr Fisk, and that of Sir Robert Peel on his election to the Rectorship of a famous Scottish University—equally elegant as a composition and animating as an appeal—inflamed me with a passionate determination to carry forward that sound classic culture which my six years' schooling at the Grove had so helpfully begun. Happily I was led to fix on Sallust as my next author, neither of his great works having been a class-book during my years at school. I cannot but regard the *Catiline* as one of the most solid and the most polished gems of classical antiquity; and for gracefulness, dignity, persistent force and almost electric concentration he must rank, I think, amongst the greatest masters of style. His philosophic prefacing is not the only indication that he made the *Cyropædia* the model for his noblest work. As

¹ See p. 117.

literature, the *Jugurtha* seems to me as much below the *Catiline* as the *Anabasis* falls short of the *Cyropædia*.

At this time, also, I was induced by Mr Frankland to begin one of the most fascinating of all studies: the Philosophy of Grammar. Besides Edwards' annotated Eton Grammar, we had in school the more advanced book of Grant. Frankland's Dublin work obliged him to procure Zumpt. Then we got hold of Buttmann. These we studied and discussed with a lingering avidity.

Another life-long study which I took up at this time was the History of Human Thought, commonly called the History of Philosophy. Unhappily, Dugald Stewart's exquisite *Dissertation on the Progress of Metaphysical, Ethical and Moral Philosophy*, did not come in my way till two years later; so I had to put up with Enfield's *History of Philosophy*, a juiceless, colourless production. I next read Paley's *Moral and Political Philosophy*, gaining very little light or satisfaction on the former subject, but much of both upon the latter. I then betook myself to Robertson's *Charles V.*, having read his far more charming *History of America* three years before. It took me a whole year off and on to tunnel¹ through the first volume, and it required all my British tenacity of purpose to look through it at all. When, however, Robertson becomes sufficiently interested in his narrative to forget his monotonous cadences, as in his account of the discovery of America, he rises to a strain of subdued yet fascinating eloquence, and his characterisations as of Ximenes and Loyola are fine specimens of powerful portraiture. Yet even his contribution to the history of his own romantic country, which I read soon afterwards, is a triumph of tameness and domesticity, considering the events and personages of which he undertook to treat.

Another noteworthy visitant who crossed the Atlantic in 1837 was the eloquent ex-slave Edward Fraser. Refinement of thought and speech was his chief characteristic, his felicity of language being such that an incorrigible Grove master suggested that his name should be spelt Phraser. Edward Fraser was well worthy to have his place in the long procession of the notabilities of Methodism at the close of the first century of its history. His owner, who was also his father, finding so much Scotch sharpness in his dusky slave son, had spent as much

¹ See p. 119: "master."

money on his education as would save himself the yearly salary of a competent clerk. But the great factor in the half-breed's education was the preaching of the Wesleyan Methodist missionaries. His father-owner had, at the earnest appeal of the Conference, at last given him his manumission, in order to his entering the Wesleyan Methodist Ministry. No one could have been more qualified for the mission for which he was invited to this country: "To raise funds for educational and religious purposes in the West Indies," at the time when slavery in the British Empire had received its sentence of death; and a nation, "born in a day," was to be educated to use wisely its new-found liberty. Himself a noble specimen of culture, manliness and polish, he was a persuasive proof of the intellectual and spiritual capabilities of the slaves who had just then "sprung to men at the sound of Britannia's voice." He spent a short time at Woodhouse Grove, and showed himself the gentleman by his easy dignity of manner. The very attractiveness of the man who, till the age of twenty-eight, had been a slave, only set forth more strikingly the hatefulness of the system. He was a noble trophy of Wesleyan missions in the West Indies.

The alarming attack which I had experienced in Derby did not deter me from walking to that fair town again during the next vacation, to see my revered and beloved tutor, Brownell, or from accompanying him to his evening appointment at the lovely village of Mackworth. I thus not only secured the privilege of once more profiting by the ministrations of one of the most fervid and nourishing preachers of his time, but also an introduction to one of the most charming and accomplished Methodist laymen of the day, Mr Thomas Russell, M.A., Principal of a long famous academy at Mackworth, at which a large proportion of the sons of prosperous Methodists of the district were trained, including four future missionaries to China, and several serviceable ministers in the home work, amongst whom was Dr Gervase Smith, in the interval between his leaving Mr Roscoe's establishment and his entrance at Wesley College, Sheffield. During the forty-five years of his educational work at Mackworth, Mr Russell exerted an influence none the less lasting and extensive because so quiet and gentle, not only on the mental habits of his pupils, but also on their manners, and on their character and spiritual life. He was an old Kingswood boy,

and had all the charm of that superior Southern softness and smoothness which we bluffer Grove lads admiringly acknowledged. The service was held in the dining-hall of the establishment. Mr Brownell characteristically held a very lively prayer meeting after the weeknight service.

It was on this visit, too, that I formed a friendship which I greatly prized : that of the late Rev. Thomas Powell. He was at that time stationed in Derby, and was labouring hard on his work on *Apostolical Succession*. I spent with him a most delightful, memorable morning, conversing on books and on the best aids then available for the correct rendering of Greek and Latin writers. He had already accumulated a library—amazing in the case of a Methodist minister of no private means—of ecclesiastic and patristic lore. This he had accomplished at an almost incredibly small expense, by the aid of London book-dealers who attended the great Continental book-fairs, and by a most skilful system of exchange. Mr Powell would have made a noble figure in a book which was about that time exerting a most stimulating influence on the popular mind : Lord Brougham's *Pursuit of Knowledge under Difficulties*. The son of a farm labourer, himself a farm-labourer till he was five or six-and-twenty years of age, by dint of heroic industry and self-denial, he managed to accumulate a rich store of Latin, Greek, and English erudition, of which he was the master, not the beast of burden. This interview with Mr Powell, of course, greatly quickened my interest in his work when it appeared. I became better acquainted with him subsequently when he was stationed at Belper. His manners were most winning, and his presence was distinguished and imposing. Had there been in Methodism a canonry or prebend's stall Thomas Powell would have been the man for the place.

The squeamish state of my health obliged me during this vacation to resume the naturalist rambles of my earlier boyhood, in the country lanes and fields. I spent nearly all my mornings in these improving explorations. My happiest hunting-ground was the lonesome and almost deserted old Crich Road, which had been superseded by a shorter and more level cut. Upon this road I never met anyone but a slouching, staring farmer's lad sent out on some errand, and was never overtaken but by a party of navvies on their way to their work on a section of the Midland Railway, which was

then being formed in the valley below. From their gruff and humorous conversation, they must have been blood relations of the heroine of the nursery rhyme who "lived upon nothing but victuals and drink," for that was their only subject of discussion, and their loud talking could be heard distinctly at some distance. The profound solitariness of the adjacent closes and copses made them the paradise of all shy and man-distrusting creatures. My great surprise was finding myself able to put myself on visiting terms with a cuckoo. Up to this time my acquaintance with this shrill-voiced bird had been that of the country-haunting Wordsworth :—

"E'en still thou art to me
No bird but an invisible thing,
A voice, a mystery.

One morning I heard the familiar note so startlingly near as to inspire me with the hope of seeing the vocalist in its own bodily shape, guided by the sound. I steadily advanced behind a wall, and soon beheld the bird with perfect clearness in the golden sunlight at a very short distance. Further off it would have been concealed effectually by the correspondence of its colour with that of the old stone wall and the old ash tree near which it was making its morning meal. The bird did not seem to "mind" me in the least, though I was so close to it as to be able, not only to watch its movements, which were confined to a very narrow space, but also to take note of its expressions of countenance; it seemed full of character, resolute and scheming. It was a quaint-looking creature, with all the gravity of an eremite, and was eagerly absorbed in its insect-hunting. In shape it was very much like a hawk. I interviewed my new found friend, at the same time and place, day after day, as if by appointment. The impression I received was that this idealised pet of the poets is the most unsentimental and self-conceited of birds. Its note is said by some naturalists to be a love call, but, if this be, it does not succeed. It gave me the idea of animated and intense self-felicitation. Every time it swallowed a delicious morsel it gave forth its cuck-coo. I believe the cuckoo is the very symbol of selfishness. Having laid the responsibility of rearing her offspring upon other parents, I believe she cares as little for her mate as she does for them. Is not this

another of nature's analogies? But I was greatly surprised to find the cuckoo a ground feeder; and that the sound that filled and thrilled such a wide area was uttered from the ground and not from the top of a tree.

The Conference of 1837 being held in Leeds, I was for the second time privileged with a view of the Wesleyan ministry in conference assembled. I attended several of its services, the most interesting of which was the public examination of candidates for ordination. The president was the Rev. Edward Grindrod, a presentable and dignified personality. He is now best known as an authority on Methodist law, and the author of the *Compendium of Wesleyan Methodism*.

The most popular sermon preached at this Conference was delivered by the Rev. G. B. Macdonald, father of the Rev. F. W. Macdonald, the text being "the word of the Lord is tried." A country Methodist with whom I conversed on that subject exclaimed with enthusiasm: "Eh, he did punish them infidels!" At this Conference, too, I first heard that noble preacher, John M'Lean. As at that time the Conference had not yet been held at Bradford, Hull, or Newcastle, the Methodism of the north crowded into Leeds as to its great trysting-place.

In the autumn of this year I walked into Leeds to hear the Annual Missionary Sermons, and took the opportunity of attending the Saturday evening band meeting, at the newly erected Oxford Place Chapel. It was conducted by the fervid John Anderson, and was a most animated service. The crowded Saturday evening band meetings at Leeds, Hull and Bradford were powerful factors in the building up of Yorkshire Methodism. On the Sunday morning I heard the only man, with the exception of Robert Newton, who, up to that time, realised and far surpassed my ideal of an orator. This was Theophilus Lessey. I was privileged to listen to his greatest sermon from the text: "Thou art good, and doest good."

Lessey, like Newton, had the build of an orator, though he was neither quite so tall nor so handsome; but he was much more intellectual looking. I never gazed upon such a majestic oratorical scowl as Lessey could assume upon occasion. His mere delivery of the hymns well repaid my sixteen miles' walk. Up to that time I had greatly depreciated the Supplement to the Hymn-book, which was then recently issued, and had used

the comparison which I was surprised to learn in after years that Montgomery had used—that the Supplement was to the Hymn-book as the Apocrypha to the Bible.

But Lessey's musical, majestic and impassioned rendering of the hymns: "Far as creation's bounds extend," and "Rock of Ages cleft for me!" quite changed my estimate. He was beyond compare the finest reader of the Scriptures I ever listened to. He began his sermon most unpromisingly, plunging into crude and ill-mastered metaphysics in the endeavour to reduce all the divine attributes into mere phases of goodness. I could not help wondering what a Rawdon Methodist who sat near me would think of this disquisition, and asked him afterwards. His answer was: "It minded meh of t' last time I heered him, when Brother——was sitting next meh, and he nundges meh and whispers: 'Where is heh?' and I says: 'Bide a bit, mun, he'll cum dahn i' now,' (just now); and that Sunday morning in St Peter's Chapel he did "come down" with such a deluge of overwhelming pathos as I have never heard elsewhere.

In the afternoon I heard the father of one of the bright lads in my own school class, the second great and—alas!—short-lived revivalist bearing the name John Smith. His forte consisted in the directness, heartiness and fervour of his appeals, and in the profusion of his striking anecdotes. I walked back to Woodhouse Grove, after the evening service, as if upon the high places of the earth, rehearsing the substance of the sermons to a holiday maker who at Kirkstall forge asked to join me, as the road at that time was very lonely, and had been the scene of many robberies. Lessey, like Anderson, owed his effectiveness as a preacher, to a very great extent, to his own intense sensibility.

At this time I felt great spiritual quickening through intercourse with my uncle, William Towler, who, at the Conference of 1837, was an accepted candidate for the Foreign Missions, and was appointed to Port-au-Prince, Hayti, because of his familiarity with the French language. From the time of his leaving the Grove to that of his conversion he had been "very gay," having been a traveller for a large firm, in those days especially a most perilous vocation. But on his conversion, his consecration was complete; a more devoted man I never met.

In March 1838, when I was nearly seventeen and a half years old, the superintendent of the Woodhouse Grove Circuit, the Rev. John Walker, who was also my class leader, took me aside, after consultation with the Governor and his own colleague Elijah Jackson, and told me he thought it high time I began to preach. I pleaded for a couple of months in which to prepare my first sermon. With this I took the utmost possible pains, and I had the advantage of the advice and candid criticism of three older preachers to whom I read the manuscript, the Revs. Joshua Wood, Elijah Jackson, and my friend John Smetham, who had begun to preach a few months earlier. My most serviceable adviser was Joshua Wood, who, though himself, like his father, rhetorically inclined, yet pruned down my most exuberant imaginings.

Before I ventured to face the public, I retired to the most secluded part of the Grove, a little cavern called the Grotto, where I declaimed my composition with all possible animation and assurance. Suddenly I heard in the trees above my head an uncontrollable burst of laughter, and at once instinctively shouted "Methley! come down." Whereupon immediately dropped from the boy-bearing tree three young trespassers, to whom I said, "Now, you three, mind I never hear anything about this again, or else *you'll* hear about it again." They mutely ducked their heads and ran back into the playground. The incessant recurrence of the words "my brethren" so tickled the lads that three pocket handkerchiefs could not keep Jerry Thompson's sense of the ludicrous from explosion. So well did they keep the implied compact that I never heard of the incident again for forty years.

As the vacation was close at hand, Mr Walker considerably suggested that I should make my first attempt in the Belper Circuit, where I should not have my critical colleagues as hearers. I delivered my credentials to the Belper superintendent, the Rev. Thomas Edwards, a most devoted man of God, who had given up for the sake of Methodism the prospect of a University education and a rich preferment, his father being a wealthy clergyman. He had been for some time one of our missionary secretaries. He gave me leave to take the earliest opportunity of making my first attempt at preaching, suggesting that my father should be one of my hearers. It happened that one Sunday evening in May my father was

appointed to preach at Belper, but in the afternoon was incapacitated by illness. Every Belper local preacher who was not "planned" that evening had accepted the invitation of a famous local preacher, that most interesting and hospitable host, Farmer Slater, to attend one of the great annual festivals of the Belper Circuit—the Sunday school anniversary at Shottles, some three miles from the town. There seemed nothing for it but that the Belper Sunday evening congregation should go sermonless, or that I should take the service.

My choice of text: "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world," had been determined by Wesley's hymn for a preacher:—

" His only righteousness I show,
His saving truth proclaim,
'Tis all my business here below
To cry, ' Behold the Lamb ! ' "

After I had uttered a few sentences, my mind became a total blank ; but I bethought me : " I must go on saying something," so I made a quiet apology on the ground of utter want of practice, and thus recovered myself. The sermon was an altogether individual production. It dealt entirely with the grand fundamental doctrines of the Gospel : the way in which " sin " entered into the " world," and became a most profound, prominent, and universal element of human history ; the economy of salvation, on God's part, by sacrifice, substitution, and expiation ; and the way of salvation on man's part. It was a kind of prose epos, betraying the fact that imaginative reading had formed a large part of my mental aliment. It was concluded in genuine old Methodist fashion by a passionate appeal to different classes of character : to the impenitent, to look on Him Whom they had pierced ; to the penitent, to look on Him and be saved ; to believers, to make their life a continuous gazing on the Lamb, first as their ground of acceptance with God, and then as their Example.

The sermon was shortly afterwards delivered, by request, at Heanor, where it was heard by Gervase Smith, who was wont to declare in after years that I had never done anything to approach it since.

My second sermon was addressed to believers, according to the custom at that time, of preaching mainly to believers in the

morning, and to the unconverted in the evening. The text was: "Ye are the light of the world." My sorest "trial sermon" was my first in the pulpit of Woodhouse Grove. Dr Robert N. Young has often reminded me of the free and easy confidential terms which existed between my pupils and myself, as illustrated by the fact that a code of signals was agreed upon between us by which they should indicate whether I was speaking too loudly or not loudly enough, or using too much or too little action.

All this time I fed and fanned the flame of zeal for the conversion of souls, and for personal growth in grace, by reading the lives of eminent Christians. The most quickening of these I found to be the lives of Henry Martyn, Pearce the Nonconformist, William Carvosso, Mrs Schimmelpenninck's books on *Port Royal* and the *Moravian Chronicle*, and *The Memorial Days of the Renewed Church of the Brethren*.

The times were agitated and anxious both in the world and in the Church. My journey home at the vacation was rendered very interesting and lively by the fact that it fell on the day of the great Peep Green meeting: one of the earliest of the enormous outdoor gatherings of incipient Chartism. The road between Leeds and Sheffield was made animated and picturesque by the calling out of the Yeomanry Cavalry of the district—the men in their bright and vari-coloured regimentals, and the officers galloping across the nobleman's parks. Another Peterloo was feared. The two principal speakers were an ex-Wesleyan Methodist minister, Rev. Joseph Rayner Stephens, and an ex-Wesleyan Methodist local preacher, Richard Oastler, of Huddersfield. Though Stephens was perhaps the ablest member of a very able family, I am disposed to think, from Oastler's published letters and reported speeches, that he was naturally the abler man of the two. Although he had not, like Stephens, the advantage of a Woodhouse Grove education, of foreign travel, and of intercourse with distinguished men, Oastler was a genuine orator and a real genius.

The great safeguard against insurgency in the West Riding was a diffusion amongst the masses of the knowledge of, and belief in, the Holy Scriptures. An artisan wrote an admirable lyrical appeal to his fellow-workmen, of which I may give one verse:—

“God, my brothers, will not leave us,
Still His sky is o’er us bent ;
His commandments are not grievous,
Do His will and be content.
Let us learn to pray and labour,
Conquer wrong by doing right ;
Love alone shall be our sabre,
Truth alone our shield in fight.”

During these years I was still pursuing my theological studies with avidity and ardour. The first reading of Butler's *Analogy* is an era in one's intellectual life. The argumentative bishop is not only a prince amongst apologists and a giant amongst logicians, but he is, most of all, a thinker and a trainer in the art of thinking. Of all the golden lessons which I learned from my beloved tutor, Mr Brownell, this has been of the most service to me through life : once in the days of my vanity, before my conversion, when I had broken one of the regulations of the school, I tried to excuse myself by saying, “If you please, sir, I thought so and so,” to which he answered : “But what right had you to think so ?” I felt the force of his reply, and saw that there is a right and wrong in thinking : that no one may claim a Divine right to think wrongly.

CHAPTER VII

A CANDIDATE FOR THE MINISTRY

ON Good Friday morning, 1838, I walked over from Woodhouse Grove to Brunswick, Leeds, to hear the annual sermon to that flourishing frond of the Leeds Branch Missionary Society, the Juvenile Missionary Association. The preacher was George Steward, then in the tenth year of his ministry, of whom I knew nothing more than what the bill informed me, that he was "of Manchester"; but with whom I was to grow into a close and confidential intimacy. His physique was tall, well-rounded and well-shaped; his pose was natural and stately; his forehead sweeping and strongly marked with convolutions, and his contour noble. The bloom of the Worcestershire orchards still lingered on his features, and his full-lipped mouth, suggestive alike of eloquence and healthy, rich appreciation of all "the precious things brought forth by the sun," appeared the fitting conduit of the stream of ambrosial eloquence which welled out almost without a pause. He had "the contortions of the Sybil" as well as "her inspiration." His delivery was unique. It was full of odd and unaccountable movements, which in no wise befitted the magnificence of his discourse. His utterance was a kind of chant. He intoned the lessons with a wonderfully exegetic emphasis. His text was: "And the glory which Thou gavest Me I have given them." The first sentence he uttered made me start with astonishment. I said to myself: "If I forget everything else he says, I will remember that." But whilst I thus soliloquised, he rolled out, with his strange and priest-like cadences, another oracle of even greater depth and suggestiveness; and, from beginning to end, his deliverance was as the inflowing tide of a phosphorescent sea, billow bounding over billow, and wave engulfing wave, as if from the very glory-sea of which he prophesied.

When I got back to the Grove and had to essay the giving to Smetham an outline or a hint of the salient points of the

discourse, I was "as a man astonished." I could scarcely quote a sentence, although ever and anon a quotable epigram or an aphorism, like some shapely, gleaming fish, leaped out of the rolling firth of eloquence. The first thing that struck one was the amazing fusion of a lofty intellectuality with a superb imaginativeness, as well as a sensibility which had the preacher in its grasp. And though there was so little to be verbally recalled in justification of one's enthusiasm to oneself or others,

"Yet when the stream that overflowed the soul
Had passed away, a consciousness remained
That there was left upon the shore of memory
Sweet images and precious thoughts
That will not die, and cannot be destroyed."

And the impression left was clear and deep and strong and glowing. The preacher was evidently a great thinker, a great theologian, and withal a glorious Gospeller. If ever any preacher was "original," it was George Steward. He was a much greater thinker than reader. He spent his time in brooding over the Bible and the best books. When our friendship had become sufficiently compact to allow the liberty, I asked him whom he thought the three greatest English Divines. He replied: "Hooker, Howe and Fletcher." But his one great gownless theological Principal was George Steward, a farmer's son, born on banks of "Severn swift—fit emblem of his oratory, which, beginning in a struggling ooze, at every reach gains breadth and impetus and volume until it spreads into a mighty estuary, laden with the wealth of nations."

The sermon which I heard Harris *read* in Brunswick Chapel, when he was not yet thirty-four years of age, he afterwards delivered, with immense effect, in Great Queen Street Chapel, London, on behalf of the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society.

Sir Henry H. Fowler once asked Mr Gladstone to tell him who he regarded as the greatest preacher in the middle of the present century. His reply was: "Melvill, without doubt!" I think that if he had heard Harris at his best, he would have given him the palm. Melvill was, indeed, the greatest preacher in the Established Church; although, even then, it was endowed with an affluence of pulpit-power; but so far as I ever heard or read him, he never soared so high as

Harris. Harris was the only man I ever heard—Dr Dallinger excepted—whose reading was to the full as effective as his speaking.

About this time I heard several of the most powerful Congregationalist preachers. I heard James Parsons, of York, at Idle—a pun-provoking name for a school of the prophets—where he had been educated for the ministry, for Idle was the predecessor of Airedale College. At the beginning of a discourse his *manner* was most peculiar and unpromising. I could only compare the movement of his head and body to that of a hen picking up grains of wheat. But by degrees his action became impetuous and impassioned, and one was conscious of a strange giving-off of feeling from the speaker to oneself—a stream of sympathy. The sermon was mainly addressed to the students from Airedale, some two miles distant, the text being: “I must work the works of Him that sent Me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work.” He made a touching reference to his own consciousness of failing strength, though he was in middle manhood. He said: “I find that excessive labour is already working its inevitable results”: yet a quarter of a century later I found him hale, blooming and vigorous, and three years later he preached the annual missionary sermon in Oldham Street, Manchester; and, but for the glory-crown of his gray hairs, looking far younger and far fresher than he had done eight and twenty years before.

In one respect Parsons and Melvill were very much alike. They preached in paragraphs or passages; Melvill always ringing changes on his text with the refreshing charm of some sweetly solemn chime. In Parsons’ case a serviceable infirmity had all the effect of consummate art. Being short-winded, at the close of each impetuous passage he paused, to draw in a fresh inspiration. And as the congregation had held their breath as exhaustingly as he had spent his own, the hearers took advantage of the pause for vigorous respiration, and a chorus of applausive little coughs seemed to echo the entranced silence with which they had so far listened.

Another high-class congregationalist preacher, whom I also first heard about this time, was Ely, of Leeds. His great power lay in his painterly descriptions of scenes and scenery, his acute analysis of character, and his graceful and majestic elocution.

On the day of the Queen's *Coronation*, June 28th, 1838, I witnessed an adventure such as I supposed never to occur in this country. I was spending the day in company with young Gervase Smith at *Heanor Fall*, an ancient grange rendered classical by William Howitt in his *Boy's Country-Book*, as the chief home of his childhood, being the residence of his maternal grandparents. It had been bought by the father of Dr Gervase Smith, a blood relation of its ancient occupants, the two properties being adjacent: Heanor Fall sloping beautifully down to *The Lower Fall*, Mr Smith's own residence. Heanor Fall was let to a fine old Methodist Supernumerary Minister, very comfortably circumstanced. The house was a pretty country mansion, with a large and luxuriant garden, and a beautiful paddock of considerable acreage. Old Thomas Newton had a face and figure to make the passer-by stand and stare. Among the country folk, who have a genius for a sobriquet, he passed as "Th' oud [the old] General." His was the very family with whom to spend holiday. Gervase was in his brightest mood. "The golden weather" was the sample of Queen's weather; the landscape was a bit of perfect English scenery, including the venerable picturesque tower of Heanor Church, which was passionately ringing forth a nation's fealty and gladness. We spent the evening on the paddock, but at sunset retired into the house. Suddenly a huge snake, twice the size of any I had ever seen, confronted Mr Newton. It rose up upon its tail, and levelled its eager head, like a cobra in a picture. It seemed as if the next moment it would dart upon his face. But "th' oud General" was too quick for it. He had in his hand a stout walking-staff, which had accompanied him to and from many a country appointment. With a promptitude, a precision and a decisiveness which justified the popular appreciation, he struck "the venomous beast," and fatally bruised its head. On measuring the creature we found it to be five feet four inches long.

In December, 1838, I attended the three memorable Centenary Meetings at Leeds. They anticipated by a few weeks the actual Centenary. The most telling speech by far was that of James Wood, of Manchester, grandfather of Dr James Wood, of Southport, with his account of being taken by his mother to hear Wesley preach in the old church at Bradford. He was a gem of a man, sparkling with intelli-

gence, generosity, good humour, and a heavenly-minded cheerfulness. He was a perfect gentleman in dress and manners. After the luncheon in the Music Hall, for which I was presented with a ticket, Dr Bunting made a most frank and naïve self-revelation, paying a noble tribute to the worthies from whom he had learnt the principles and tried to catch the spirit of the genuine Methodism whose rise they were then commemorating.

The enthusiasm at the Leeds meetings was immense and glorious. The collections, including sums subscribed before the meeting, amounted to sixteen thousand seven hundred and twenty pounds, though a productive meeting had been held in Sheffield three days before. But no small trial overtook me in connection with this celebrated celebration. A circular arrived from the chairman of the district, Dr Newton, instructing the superintendent to see that two sermons should be preached in the principal chapel on the Sunday before the Centenary meetings for the Circuit. Now it so happened that my name stood upon the Plan for Woodhouse Grove chapel on the morning of that very day. In vain I appealed to the superintendent, who, being a most careful sermoniser, found his *work set* in having at such short notice to prepare a Centenary sermon for the evening. Even Governor Morley would not help; his days were over for making new sermons for special occasions. So there was nothing for it but to *buckle to*. I chose as my text, 2 Corinthians ii. 14: "Now thanks be unto God, Who always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest through us the savour of His knowledge in every place." My leading thoughts were: (1) That *God* is the efficient *Cause*, and therefore, the rightful End; and Christ, the very element of all true Christian triumph. (2) That all Christian progress is "*triumph*"—and that over the most formidable obstacles and enemies. (3) That all true Evangelistic work is a *manifestation* of a realisable and recognisable fact; that fact being the fragrance of God's knowledge. (4) That this does actually take "place" wherever the true Gospel is faithfully and earnestly preached. In a half-hour's homily I showed the right and duty of the Methodists to adopt this impassioned thanksgiving of the first generation of Christian preachers.

In the autumn of 1839 a new and powerful factor entered

into my curriculum of self-culture: the contemplation and the study of works of Art. To this I was introduced through the superb Art Exhibition in Leeds in October 1839. This, I should think, was the first loan-exhibition; being eighteen years earlier than the larger (but not nobler in proportion to its size) exhibition at Manchester in 1857, and twelve years earlier than the great London Exhibition. The nobility and gentry of a wide area around Leeds lent freely all their art-treasures for public inspection. Some of the greatest master-pieces came from Otley Hall, the sweetly-situated ancient seat of the literary and historic Fairfax family.

The painting which impressed me most was Guido's *Cleopatra with the asp at her breast*. This picture was, I believe, lent by the Queen. It reappeared in Manchester. The voluptuous beauty, the queenliness of form and feature, suffused all over with the livid hue of death in the fullness of life, the majestic proportions, the proud endurance, which "stoops to death but conquers agony," and the eager and yet restful tenacity of "the worm of Nilus," as it sucked in that royal blood—all stamped itself indelibly on my imagination and my sensibilities.

The pictures which came next in effectiveness were by Correggio. The antique grace of form, and the holy sweetness of expression, the exquisite distribution of light and shade were to me enchanting. I could well discern much more than smartness of phrase in Sterne's coinage: "the Correggiosity of Correggio." Of course, I had not even the most rudimentary notion of criticism. I only knew what I liked, and what I felt. Next in fascination and effect were some delicious landscapes by Claude and by Nicholas Poussin. Truly, the light on Claude's pictures was "sweet" to my eyes, and the classic calm and restful joyousness were most refreshing. There were a few Raphael's: Madonnas, etc. I could not but be struck with his livingness, tranquillity and harmony. Next in effectiveness to me was the grand portrait of a Rabbi by Rembrandt: the intense contrasts, and yet the perfect consonance of gleaming light and densest shadow which rested on and seemed almost to play about that haughty, strong, unconquerable Jewish contour and the imposing Oriental costume, were very striking. I have met that man more than once in the neighbourhood of Whitechapel and

Houndsditch ; for in London one has looked upon Hebrews as Hebraic, though somewhat differently draped, as ever art could picture.

A landscape by Salvator Rosa, of which the savage grandeur was all but overpowering, impressed me very much. In contrast with this there was a profusion of Dutch painting, those by the two Teniers and Wouvermans, charming in its natural bits of rural scenery and in rustic groups and situations. English art was poorly represented, except by Hogarth, whose laughter-moving moral teaching was less difficult to decipher than to forget.

All this not only opened to me a new world, but seemed to endow me with a new faculty. Beyond the speaking portraits of Jackson and of Henry Warren, I had seen nothing which could be dignified with the name of Art, and I had never read a book on Art. My imagination was so completely possessed by these undreamt of marvels, that I could not return to my ordinary studies until I had made an ample record of every masterpiece with which I was captivated. Henceforth I never lightly let slip an opportunity of visiting a gallery of paintings. The æsthetic study of Art is assuredly one of the cardinal *humanities*.

Not that the Leeds Exhibition *created* in me the love of landscape and an admiring interest in natural objects and in human individuality, but it greatly enhanced and extended both. No doubt the engravings I had seen had intensified that passion for the picturesque, which Pickering and New Buckenham Castles, Patrington church, Kirkstall Abbey, Esholt Walk and Wood, and the woods of Calverley and Rawdon had not in vain appealed to. Unquestionably, my *feeling* for Art—it could be little more than that—rendered my early preaching much more attractive ; and, I still think, more effective, than it could otherwise have been. On the platform it was still more helpful ; there I began it much later and continued it much longer.

In 1840 I was appointed to the leadership of a class, which met at Apperly Bridge, in the house of Joseph Rhodes, who had been, through a stretch of years, the *factotum* on the Grove Estate, and had lived at the lodge. He and I had become band-mates, during my shoe-monitorship ; as he cleaned

the shoes, and I carried them to and from their "respective" pigeon-holes. If perfect love makes a perfect Christian, then Joseph Rhodes was a veritable saint. Anything unchristianly in Joseph Rhodes I could not possibly imagine. Uncharitableness in Joseph Rhodes would have been a flat contradiction in terms. And his wife Sarah was his mate in this respect as others. I had visited her in a critical illness, and had found her just as a Christian ought to be. Joseph's labours had told upon even his robust constitution ; he had saved enough money to retire ; his savings, and small pension, I think, being subsidized by Her Majesty's Government, in return for an important part of the public service which he described to me as, "'livering aht t' letters"; in commonplace English performing the, there and then, chatty, neighbourly duties of a postman. Joseph was far too simple-minded and too hearty to forswear his native dialect.

Joseph was on the best possible terms with boys and masters, and was "right trusty and well-beloved" by the Governor himself. His change of residence was almost like a change of dispensation. "The lodge" was almost too low-roofed to admit of his stalwart figure stretching itself to its full height, and the rooms were fitter for a doll's house than that of a Yorkshireman as tall as he could well "stick together." The *fresh* one (not *new* one) had evidently been the farmstead of some prosperous yeoman. The class-meeting there would have made a picture. The roomy house-place, of almost cavernous extent, as lighted by the fire and oft-snuffed rush-light ; the bak'ston' [bakestone] for making oatcake ; the racks below the roof-timbers filled with pendent oatcake and hung-beef ; the huge sides of bacon, as if prepared to stand a siege ; and presiding over the scene, the whipper-snapper spindle of a young usher, transferred from teaching boys to guiding and, still more, heartening mature Christians in their heavenward pilgrimage. This class was a great advance upon our meeting at the Grove in the Tailor's Room ; the mental development of the members was more advanced ; their experience was not stereotyped ; and their few conventionalisms were rendered piquant by their broad Yorkshire rendering. I always called on one or other of them to close the meeting with prayer ; and the oldest member's version of a phrase very common then amongst the preachers : "May we lie passive in Thy hands,"

etc., was translated thus : “ Maah weh lig passable i’ Thy hands, as cla-ah i’ the hands of the potther.”

The charm of the evening was greatly enhanced by the fact that the young preacher who divided his labours between the Yeadon and Woodhouse Grove Circuits, the Rev. W. H. Sargent, who had taken lodgings there, had made it a standing order that I should sup with him on class-nights. Though in the eighth year of his ministry, being unmarried, he was still, whether as a penalty or a premium, “ the young preacher, and only a lodger.” He was most companionable ; and being an old Grove boy himself was a frequent visitor at the Grove ; and as we both delighted in evening rambles in the woods we were very much together.

Early in 1840 the Superintendent, the Rev. Samuel Allen, asked me to allow him to propose me to the quarterly meeting as a candidate for the ministry. My friend, John Smetham, was accepted at the same time.

After quarterly meeting, district meeting follows fast. Mr Elijah Jackson, with his unfailing generosity, gave me the advantage of his own elaborate preparation for the theological examination which he had passed three years before. It must have cost him months of strenuous study : it formed a compact and complete little handbook of Methodist theology. On a bright May morning, John Smetham and I, with four other candidates, presented ourselves at six A.M. before the solemn conclave of the ministers of the Leeds district. Half the number of candidates were ex-Grove lads ; for to our delight we found our worthy school-fellow, John Muff, amongst the crop of candidates. One poor fellow was rejected ; two of them resigned after a brief ministerial course ; poor Smetham died at the end of his second year of probation, and Muff, after a ministry of thirty-two years. Our theological examination was very much curtailed by a doctrinal discussion amongst the ministers themselves, occasioned by my account of the manner in which I had gained the blessedness of Perfect Love. The Rev. Robert Walsh demurred to an expression I had used in describing the vivid consciousness with which I had *felt in myself that I was whole of the plague of sin*. Mr Walsh contended that my words implied the erroneous doctrine that

there was a "witness of the Spirit" to the fact of having received the gift of Perfect Love, corresponding to the witness of the Spirit to our Adoption. Mr Galland maintained that I did not at all clash with the Scriptural and Wesleyan-Methodist doctrine. Other ministers joined in the debate; for at that time it was a burning question in Methodist circles. I explained that I had no idea of making a doctrinal confession, but simply of narrating a personal experience. The conduct of the theological examination was wisely left mainly to Mr Galland, who proved himself a Master in Theology, and a playfully affectionate Father in the Church. Some of his incidental remarks have been of great service to me throughout my theological studies.

Both Smetham and myself cleared our consciences as to the Anglican doctrine of Baptismal Regeneration, declaring that if certain expressions in Wesley's *Sermons* were supposed to involve that tenet, we must frankly confess our inability to receive it. We were assured by the chairman, and by acclamation of the meeting, that those expressions, taken in conjunction with the context, contained no such signification. We rejoiced for the consolation.

During the vacation which immediately followed the district meeting I spent a fortnight in Lincolnshire, with my estimable uncle, Edward Towler. This visit was a fine thing for me, as he had taken a house at Cleethorpes for the season. This was my first visit to a watering-place, as also to my mother's relatives. I had a right joyous, healthy time of it. My uncle, an old Grove lad, was a high-class local preacher, and a close reader of the best English preachers and divines. Moreover, two of my pupils were on the spot—great favourites of mine—Hocken and Theophilus Pearson. Theo was a fascinating lad, albeit lawless and untamable, yet with keen literary tastes. During the foregoing year, two of my main studies had been Shakespeare and the newly issued complete works of Wordsworth, and I found in Theo a most congenial fellow-student: we read aloud alternately, by the hour, generally wandering on the banks of the Aire. I dealt closely with him about his soul, but with small apparent effect. His overmastering outwardness of disposition, his ecstatic enjoyment of life, and his irrepressible effervescence of animal spirits were his connatural besetments. Next to Henshaw, he

was the hardest and most self-reliant acrobat throughout my twelve years' Grove life. He would perform feats which almost froze one's blood to witness, with a drollery that convulsed one afterwards. He retained this boyish accomplishment, with his other boyishness, to the very last.

But my chief luxury at Cleethorpes was to walk over to Grimsby, have an hour's chat with Theo's mother, and get Theo to walk back with me to Cleethorpes. I had the pleasure of seeing a good deal of Theo during the rest of his too short life. During my three years' term in the Second London Circuit, he was a member of my flock at Great Queen Street.

When he came up to London to the July examination for the ministry, he was my guest with Dr Randles, who doubtless well remembers the continuous outflow of his interesting talk. As I was walking homewards on the Sunday evening, after hearing two capital candidates—Edward Guest and John Poulton, I fell in with Mr Arthur, who at once asked eagerly whom I had heard, and what sort of men they were. When I had answered: "Two decidedly superior men, who have the right stuff in them for our work; men who know how to preach and pray and read the Scriptures and give out the hymns." "Thank God," said Mr Arthur, "and I have heard a first-rate man, one who is bound to take high rank as a preacher. His name is Theophilus Pearson. Can you tell me anything about his antecedents?" So I had good tidings for my old pupil when I met him that night at supper.

I preached at Cleethorpes on the first Sunday and at Market Rasen on the second. At the latter place, in discoursing on the text: "Have faith in God," I was greatly blessed in being made the means of the conversion of a young man, Jonathan Dent, who for thirty-eight years laboured hard and effectively as a genuine Methodist Minister.

The drive from Cleethorpes to Market Rasen gave me my first peep at picturesque Lincolnshire; for there is a portion of the county well worthy of that epithet, though most Englishmen are unacquainted with the fact, and regard the county as the synonym for flatness and monotony. I had indeed crossed the shire by waggon, from Yorkshire to Cambridgeshire, but I had never seen *the Wolds*, immortalized by the native muse of Tennyson:—

“On either side the river lie
Long fields of barley and of rye,
Which clothe the wold and meet the sky.”

Our route lay through Caistor—well worthy of being the traditional scene of one of the most romantic incidents of British history, the story of Vortigern and Rowena—and thence at the foot of the wolds. Though never reaching quite a thousand feet in height, the wolds from Caistor or from Ancaster to Skyhills fully vindicate the county of Wesley, Sir Isaac Newton, Lord Tennyson, Franklin, and Richard Watson from the discredit of being a mere land of “flats, fogs and fens,” as it has been regarded by those who do not know it.

During the vacation I also preached at Driffeld, where my worthy uncle, William Wilkinson, was then stationed. During the years 1839-40 my acquaintance with Methodist chapels and Methodist families was extended considerably. Like many another young man, I had a morning flush of popularity. This was owing chiefly to the “chumified relations” between myself and my pupils, many of whose fathers were stationed in the Leeds and the Halifax and Bradford district. Through their trumpeting I got a good many invitations to preach Sunday school sermons, and speak at missionary meetings. Of course, being still in my teens, I had the paradoxical but the no less real *prestige* of juvenility. Besides, my style of preaching was as yet hardly in its teens, but was as juvenile and imaginative as any one would wish: “airy,” a village local preacher called it. It was, moreover, intensely Methodist. Still further, I did not require “a supply,” and as I almost always walked to and from the places where I preached—even though as distant as Dewsbury, fourteen miles, and Tingley, five miles further still—I was “very handy.”

It must not be supposed that the examination of candidates in the Leeds district in 1840 was slurred or hurried, although it was enlivened by a ministerial discussion on a theological and experimental subject. It lasted six hours, engrossing two whole sessions from six to eight A.M. and from nine A.M. to one P.M. In one respect candidates for our ministry enjoyed an immunity not shared by their brethren of to-day; we had no “trial-sermon” to preach at the district meeting; our Circuit trial-sermon was deemed sufficient.

The text of my trial-sermon, preached at Eccleshall, in

order to my being proposed as a candidate at the Woodhouse Grove Quarterly Meeting, was John xiv. 33: "If any man love Me, he will keep My words, and My Father will love him, and We will come unto him and make our abode with him." As a specimen of my style of preaching at this time, I give my concluding appeal. At that time no one ever thought of finishing a sermon without a direct and earnest appeal to the conscience and affections of his hearers. I copy from my journal: "What shall I say to secure your acceptance of this heavenly blessedness? What has not God said? What has He not done? He stoops from the throne of universal homage, and beseeches you to admit Him thus consciously and permanently into your heart. The God that heareth prayer becomes your suppliant. As though the Inhabitant of Eternity were homeless, as if the glorified Son of man had still not where to lay His crowned head, He implores you: 'Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any man hear My voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and sup with him, and he with Me.'"

All this time I was reading hard. The next book which I was led to study was a work of great labour and judiciousness: Horne's *Introduction to the Critical Study of the Holy Scriptures*. This was, and is, a really great work, in four massive and closely printed volumes (7th edition corrected and enlarged, 1834). I found it to be of inestimable service. Lest, in these days of systematic depreciation of the past, I should be suspected of partiality and exaggeration, I will simply endorse the judgement of a first-rate living bibliographer and critic, whose competence and knowledge will not be questioned: Dr Schaff, in his edition of Herzog's *Encyclopædia* (1883): "Horne's *Introduction* is the most famous book of its class. It covers the entire field of Biblical learning . . . not only general and special introduction proper, but hermeneutics, apologetics, Biblical geography, natural history, etc. It has been of inestimable value to the Church, and the means of turning many persons into profound Biblical students." Horne's *Introduction* was to me a real ushering into the state-apartments of the palace of Divine Truth. The very portico: on *The Genuineness and Authenticity of the Old and New Testaments*, I found to be a grand castellated structure.

The work I was advised to take up next was Dr Graves

on *The Last Four Books of Moses*, a book in which I was profoundly interested, and which has proved of life-long service. Though it will not bear comparison with Kurtz on *The Old Covenant*, it is masterly in its own line, its chief value being in satisfactorily meeting objections. How often have I been constrained to say in reading living authors of repute and high position: "O, that this over-subtle man had but read the solid, sensible old Graves."

This finished, I betook me to a still famous book, Bishop Warburton on *The Divine Legation of Moses*. I found the book both engrossing and remunerative, as the work of a man of genius can hardly fail to be, whatever his aberrations or his eccentricities. But its chief value was its sturdy, rugged English, well worthy of the study of any Briton who would like to know the strength and stoutness of his mother-tongue. Warburton's English is like a gnarled and knotted oak in winter time, of giant girth, but verdureless, stripped like an athlete for some grand encounter. His chapter on *Church and State* opened to me a new field of thought.

The piece of Apologetic which contributed most at this time to my "furtherance and joy of faith" was Pascal's *Thoughts*. Its profound and sublime wisdom entranced as much as it edified me. I learned from this gigantic thinker many truths which I have never unlearned. Along with Introduction and Apologetic, I studied with avidity such commentaries as came within my reach. I never was much more surprised than by the account given by Dr Marcus Dods, in his address on *Modern Theology*, of the condition of Biblical knowledge and exegetical resource in Presbyterian manses at the time of his own young manhood. He informs us that little in the shape of exposition was to be found except Matthew Henry and Thomas Scott. But what a contrast the Presbyterian manse must have presented to the Wesleyan-Methodist preacher's house of fifty years ago in respect of Commentaries on the Holy Scriptures! Every theological work I have yet mentioned, as well as those which I am about to mention, was generously lent me from the library of some Methodist minister or that of a local preacher. Howe and Graves I borrowed from a Rawdon local preacher, Brother Woodward, a village tinman, with whom it was always both a luxury and an edification to converse.

Some of the finest passages in Young's *Night Thoughts* are mere poetic paraphrases of Pascal. From Pascal's *Thoughts* I passed on to Howe's *Living Temple*. The philosophic tincture of Howe's thought had for me a mighty fascination. Howe's *Living Temple* is a great work; with its wealth of quotation from the grandest heathen moralists, from mediæval ethics and philosophy, and from Protestant divines. It may be almost regarded as the stately crown of the venerable majestic aloë of philosophical theology up to that time; for Howe had studied both at Cambridge and at Oxford, and was even an apter pupil of the Cambridge Platonists than of the Oxford Puritans. It is to be deplored that the involutions and convolutions of his style in some portions of his best-known works, which he might have caught from Cromwell, whose chosen chaplain he was, should be so discouraging to some young readers, but he is rich in racy vernacular expressions and in happy phraseology, and sometimes rises to the noblest heights of eloquence.

But I confess to profound disappointment and dissatisfaction with the first few commentaries I studied. They had one grave fault in common: the conspicuous absence of any solid satisfying *principle* of interpretation. The commentators evidently treated each successive text *by the rule of thumb*: each giving it the explanation which suited best his own mental tastes and habitudes. This was the case with Adam Clarke, who, although his meditations were delightful and many of his illustrations from the Classics and old English sources interesting in a high degree, blinks many difficult passages, and is sadly lacking in homogeneity. Yet as a literary achievement the work is prodigious, and being at once the most profoundly erudite and the most miscellaneously readable commentary that had yet appeared, it won an immense popularity both within and without the Connexion, and greatly raised Methodism in the public estimation. It was, in fact, a great power in its time, notwithstanding its eccentricities and defects.

Still less satisfaction did I gain from the next work I took in hand, Campbell on *The Four Gospels*, translated from the Greek. The preliminary dissertations, though dry, seemed to me the best part of the performance. But I found Campbell, both as a translator and a critic, to be arbitrary and untrustworthy.

From Campbell I betook myself with eagerness to the then

just published *first* volume of Bloomfield's Greek Testament ; but though scholarly and full of smooth and pleasant reading, it seemed to me to do little more than collect the surface drainage of the New Testament. The second volume, however, was a marked improvement on the first, being enriched with extracts from expositors endowed with deeper insight. Bloomfield's commentary is very learned and cumulative, but his matter is imperfectly digested. I next studied another of the newest expositions, Cobbin's *Condensed Commentary*, in which I found some very "good pickings."

I also read the then recently published sermons of Dr M'All, one of the three Macs who have told most powerfully on the men of Manchester. With M'All I was disappointed on the whole. He was too rhetorical, and was vastly indebted to his impassioned delivery. But some passages are really very fine ; and his sermon on "I magnify mine office" is especially noble in sentiment and masterly in diction.

His discourse on "Mighty to Save," preached in our own Oldham Street Chapel, was overwhelming in its effect. An incident well worth preserving occurred on this occasion. About the middle of the sermon he was exhausted by his own vehement evangelical enthusiasm, and paused and panted. William M. Bunting, who sat near the pulpit in front of the gallery, at once rose to his feet and gave out, as only he could, the lines which struck in with M'All's strain :—

"Jesus, my Lord, mighty to save,
What can my hopes withstand,
While Thee my Advocate I have
Enthroned at God's right hand?"

The living mass "rose up wholly, like a flood," and sang the verse with ecstasy. M'All again took up his parable, and finished his discourse "like a giant refreshed." My journal adds :—

"My next theological study was Pearson *On the Creed*. His lucubrations on the opening words, 'I believe,' impressed and charmed me much. He brings a profound and elegant philosophy to bear upon a most important topic, *Faith*. Yet it is sometimes doubtful, however, whether his representation of the Greek word for 'believe' is correct. This excited expectations which in the progress of the work were woefully disappointed. At times his prolixity and tediousness are past all patience. He over-explains into obscurity ; he falls

into the error that the more one says upon a subject the better it will be understood, and so he beats the fine gold of Catholic orthodoxy into the thinnest leaf; and sometimes suggests doubt by excess of exposition. He holds on with oracular doggedness, as if the reader was incapable of taking a single step by himself.

"For direct edification I read the romantic *Life of Oberlin* and that of Pearce, of Birmingham. I also re-read *Henry Martyn*. In Pearce I was struck with the painful disparity between the devotion and intensity of his aspirations after holiness, and the comparative depression of his experimental theology. The voice of the spirit within craving for entire sanctification was contradicted by the stern dogmatism of his Calvinistic system, asserting its unattainableness in this life. The perusal of his *Memoirs* strongly confirmed me in the Wesleyan doctrine, since it seems *a priori* incredible that the Gospel provision should be inadequate to the satisfaction of the spiritual desires which it excites."

During this time I also read two writers who exerted a great influence on me and on my preaching. The one was Finney on *Revivals of Religion*, the other Saurin, whose sermons were then greatly and most justly prized. Two of my juvenile discourses were written under the influence of these most earnest men; the one, on "*Have faith in God*," preached at the Grove one Sunday evening; the other, on Proverbs i. 23-31, "Because I have called and ye refused," etc., preached in the same chapel, at the Watch-night Service, which such of the elder boys as desired to do so were permitted to attend. I lost some precious time in wading through two much-praised books on Sermonising: Sturtevant's *Preacher's Manual* and another dainty book on preaching. Sturtevant treats elaborately on the structure of a sermon, and with some skill. But *then*, at least, I was no sermoniser, but simply an outpourer of truths that I had learnt and was in haste to tell.

During this period I read and re-read Hazlitt's *Spirit of the Age*. There was to me in the style of Hazlitt an irresistible fascination. His criticisms have a pungency and raciness which I had not tasted heretofore. He fired me with a boundless thirst for the English literature of the first quarter of the present century, and inspired me with a passion for political and ethical theories. His critique on Wordsworth is severe and caustic, but in the main is not unjust; that on Wilberforce is worse than worthless, betraying all his Unitarian rancour against Evangelical religion.

As at that time Socialism was epidemic in the West

Riding, and a Socialist propaganda was in full force, I was induced to study its doctrines and its methods. I touched on the subject at the missionary meetings mentioned in the foregoing chapter, held at Sowerby Bridge during the next week before Robert Owen was engaged to lecture there. My object was to contrast this atheistic scheme for the regeneration of the human species with that of the glorious Gospel.

I find in my record the following entry :—

“Easter Sunday, 1840.—Spent the intervals of worship in Esholt Walk reading Young’s *Night Thoughts* ; far too exciting for my present state. Felt profoundly dissatisfied on account of my want of simplicity of purpose and of a single eye to the Glory of God in my platform speeches. Saw the emptiness of popularity, and regretted the having made further engagements, partly, I must confess, from fear of being unable to equal my past efforts.”

“May 15.—Have lately read with much advantage several articles in *The Eclectic* and *The Quarterly Reviews*, Jackson’s *Life of Watson*, and Gregory’s *Life of Robert Hall*, with John Foster’s masterly delineation of that great man.”

“Have conversed with Smetham on the subject of Oriental Missions. We felt strongly inclined to offer ourselves for India. But, I fear that, in my own case, the enthusiasm contains a large infusion of romance.”

We both resolved to make “an unlimited offer,” leaving the Conference to judge as to our most suitable destination.

The spell of Hazlitt’s eloquence conjured up within me the old poetic passion. I studied, line by line, the then new complete edition of Wordsworth’s Poetical Works, and most of Campbell’s and Coleridge’s poems in volumes. During the vacation of 1840 I also delighted in the poetry of Bryant and Willis, which acted on my mind like a balmy breath from the transatlantic shores. The classic calm and dignity of *Thanatopsis*, and the lofty, tranquil trust of *The Waterfowl*, and the high, fresh, bracing moral and religious tone of Willis, and his vivid realisation of the fact that patriarchs, prophets and kings of old were men of like passions with ourselves, had a healthy and a quickening effect both on my experience and preaching.

Of course I read Wesley’s *Appeals*, from which I went on to that model of Christian controversy, his treatise on *Original Sin*. I also read Howe’s *Blessedness of the Righteous*, and his *Delighting in God*.

Few books so charmed me at this time as Channing's eloquent and arousing tract on *Self-culture*, and his superb and fascinating essays on Milton and Napoleon. Channing here displays a noble intellect and a brilliant imagination, and his essays must take a high rank in the literature of the present age, which abounds in the finest sentiments fervidly and forcibly expressed. But it smacks at times of Socinian self-sufficiency. And I fear but few will be brought to mend shoes and sweep streets from a high sentiment of public spirit and of moral fitness; although, thank God! they may consecrate and ennoble every useful employment by doing it "to the Lord." On a second reading of *Self-culture* I was convinced that Channing's great error as a philosopher is the making the mind to perpetually brood upon and almost idolise itself, instead of forgetting and expanding itself in some grander contemplation or pursuit.

CHAPTER VIII

THE BEGINNING OF THE MINISTRY

BY the first Newcastle Conference, in 1840, I was accepted as a probationer for the Wesleyan-Methodist Ministry, being then some four months short of twenty years of age. Governor Morley had informed me that should I be accepted, and not sent to the Institution, I should probably be asked for by the Bury Circuit to reside at Ratcliffe Close.

I was extremely anxious to enjoy the advantages of the Theological Institution. But when the Stations came to hand I found myself designated neither for the Institution nor for ordinary Circuit-work, but appointed as an additional minister to the Woodhouse Grove Circuit; having to discharge my duties as a tutor precisely as before, and also to take regular ministerial work every alternate Sunday. It had been asked in Conference whether two masters could be simultaneously taken from the school—no satisfactory successors being yet secured—without grave damage to that important Institution. It was, therefore, decided that I should remain at the Grove in this amphibious position. Smetham was appointed to Leeds.

The position entrusted to me by the Conference was as trying as it was honourable; but a few months proved that my physique was quite unequal to the strain. Most young ministers will sympathise with a fragile and highly-strung young minister whose first appointment is to the Circuit in which his years of local preachership had all been spent. No sooner was my acceptance as a probationer announced (and before my appointment to the Circuit was known), than the Rev. W. H. Sargeant, the young minister who divided his labours between the Woodhouse Grove and Yeadon Circuits, strode up to me in the school-room and said: "I congratulate you. The sooner you get to work the better." Then taking from his side-pocket a then mysterious but since familiar little packet, which I found to consist of Society-tickets, he continued:

"Now you've as much right to 'give tickets' as to preach, and you can't begin better than by 'visiting' a class. You know Mr Murray and I can scarcely overtake the increase of work given us by the glorious Revival in the Yeadon Circuit. To-night one of us must be at Yeadon and the other at Rawdon, the best class in Guiseley has had notice to meet for tickets, and Mr Murray asked me to ask you to go and meet it." Sooth to say, I was nothing loth. I took the neat little packet, as if it had been my installing pastoral staff, and musingly, cheerily and merrily took on a glorious summer evening the lovely stroll to Guiseley, through Esholt Walk and Wood. The leader of the class was a patriarchal Yorkshireman; the members were, about half of them, new converts, and the rest as if they were converted anew. No lack of freshness or of individuality: "'Twas Nature all, and all delight."

But, what puzzled me, and had the "experiences" not been so interesting and so various, would have "fair maddled" me, was an utterly unaccountable outcry, evidently close by, but the significance of which I could in no wise comprehend: it seemed a strange blending of "the voice of them that shout for mastery, the voice of them that cry for being overcome, and the noise of them that sing." Now, strangely enough, though I knew that Guiseley was in a state of Revival, it never occurred to me to connect this "mixed and mournful sound" with that felicitous event. But, having pronounced the Benediction, given and received from the members, old and young, "the right hand of fellowship," I turned to the leader and said: "Well, how's your Revival getting on?" To which he answered, with a beaming face: "O! brahveleh (bravely). That din ye hear's it." We forthwith stepped into the large school-room, where a great number of people knelt beside the ranged benches, and beat them furiously. The brother who had charge of the meeting walked up to me politely, and to my observation, "I had no idea that you had such a large number of penitents," he replied, showing the ordinary business-like way in which he gazed upon the scene: "Yis, I should think there's seventy agait" (agoing). I replied: "Dear me! in what an agony of earnestness they all seem!" He answered: "Ay, they're wrastling like nought." And, indeed, it was impossible not to recall our Lord's description of the

effect of the Baptist's preaching and His own : "The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force." One young man I can never forget. He went on wailing piteously : "I'se willing to 'liver up all."

I listened for the advices of the prayer-leaders to the penitent, but I could hear nothing beyond the continuous heartening of them to an untiring importunity in such words as these : "Stick tul (to); ye'll niver hev a better chonce." In my lonely walk back to the Grove I pondered deeply the things that I had heard and seen. I could not but feel that the mode of treatment was too mechanical, and therefore far less helpful to the intelligent believing of a contrite soul than the system of Carvosso, for example, which so soon as penitence was manifest made straight for faith. At Guiseley "the children were brought to the birth, and there was not strength to bring forth." For that poor young man, for instance, who writhingly and pantingly reiterated, "I'se willing to 'liver up all," surely the obvious counsel was : "Thank God! and you have nothing to do but to be 'willing to receive All God's goodness waits to give.' Are you willing for that?" Many years later, when I heard Mr Moody, I said to myself: This is the opposite extreme to the Guiseley method. *This* slurs the necessity for Repentance, and testifies "faith in our Lord Jesus Christ," without sufficiently emphasising "repentance toward God." *That*, unnecessarily, dangerously and injuriously, protracted the sorrow-stage. Repentance must forerun faith, as John the Baptist was the forerunner of the Saviour; but, as our Lord taught, Repentance is "*in order to* faith," as He said to John's self-righteous hearers : "*Ye repented not that ye might believe.*" The next morning when, as usual, Mr Morley asked me how I had sped, and what I thought of the Revival, I told him freely my impressions. He replied : "The difference between the Revivalism of my early life and that of the present time is just that. Now we have either what Dr Bunting calls 'unholy haste' in dealing with our penitents, or else we leave them to fight their own way into 'liberty' by mere stress of feeling."

A phrase current at the time betrayed the secret of the blunder. It was : "We *must* pass through the *pangs* of the New Birth." One evening, in the Grove pulpit, I tried to correct this mystification of a most important practical matter.

I showed that the phrase itself was absurd, and was Biblically inadmissible: that in the case of each penitent, our Lord must "see of the travail of *His* soul, and be satisfied," and that it is the pastor who should be able to say: "My little children, for whom I travail in birth, till Christ be formed in you"; that the proper phrase is: "*The struggles of the New Birth*." I was greatly encouraged by Mr Morley's strong approval of my position. To my own mind, the finest outbreathing of the true spirit of intercession for the penitents is our hymn 462: "O, let the prisoners' mournful cries"; especially the verse:—

"Show them the blood that bought their peace,
The anchor of their steadfast hope;
And bid their guilty terrors cease,
And bring the ransomed prisoners up."

I did a good deal of visitation of the classes for my superintendent, the Rev. Samuel Allen. There was always a full attendance, and there were a delightful individuality and spirit of life in Christ Jesus, a reality and a potency about the experiences. The experience was even broader than the dialect: the outgrowth of the old sturdy Methodism of John Nelson and his peers. Personal character was thoroughly expressed. Throughout my ministerial life the visitation of the classes has been one of its most charming functions. Much as it added to the labour, I always hailed the return of ticket-giving, with its increased knowledge of my flock, and its wonderful presentations of the spiritual varieties of the religious life.

Happily for me, I had been favoured with two colleagues, the most irrepressible and irresistible humorists imaginable. The elder of them would persist in reading at and after supper the *Pickwick Papers*, which were then coming out in numbers, the authorship being as yet unsuspected. He had also from a Transatlantic friend a rich supply of American newspapers, before, be it remembered, the *Biglow Papers*, *Artemus Ward*, or even *Sam Slick* had ever been thought of. These papers teemed with the most flashing and outrageous fun—an altogether new class of comedy. Jokes which fifteen years later made London roar with merriment, when delivered from the stage, were grim but sparkling fossils in these old Yankee journals. Besides, Frankland was a fine flutist, and Smetham a master of the violoncello and of a splendid voice, who could

produce uproarious effects by improvising colloquies between the higher and the lower notes.

The younger wag had the cleverest way of taking the conceit out of a co-eval. One evening Mrs Morley asked us to allow a young visitor to join us at supper. He forthwith began to pose as superior in literary and theological acquirements to the aggregate tutorship of Woodhouse Grove. When the man's brag became quite unendurable, our friend quietly walked to the book-shelf and picked up a chance copy of the First Part of the Conference Catechism, and stepping gravely up to him, put it into his hand with the profoundest deference, and said: "Would you favour us with your opinion of this work, sir?" One has since met with many pretenders to doctrinal and to literary lore to whom the same question would have been as appropriate and *dumbfoundering*.

The more carried away I was with all this wholesome nonsense, the more condemned I felt when I retired to rest. Yet I sorely needed some such harmless Saturnalia. But the ruthless recurrence of my name on the Circuit *Plan* over against *Woodhouse Grove* obliged me "to scorn delights and live laborious" nights. Frankland was in the like condition. Though not a local preacher, he was grinding hard for his Dublin degree. The inevitable penalties of an overwrought brain assailed him sooner, but far less severely. He began to lose his sleep, and found it necessary to have a romp before settling down to rest. So, when he had done his tale of work, he used to invade my bedroom, and snip the thread of my discourse by the sharp shears of his irrelevant absurdities. I soon found that there was nothing for it but to lock my door, and hold parley with the enemy with a sparred barricade. The result of these profound tactics, over which it did me good to chuckle, was once amusing and disconcerting in a high degree. I was pacing up and down between the bed-rows of the *Ten-Crib Room*, to which I had attained as a master after six years' tenancy as a scholar; for my brain has always turned off more and better material whilst my limbs were in motion. Suddenly there came at the door a gentle and apologetic knock. "That Frankland again!" I said to myself. "But," I thought, "I'm too wary for him this time." So, not objecting to a few minutes' word-play with a locked door between the combatants, I began heaping upon his head

all the meaningless, ridiculous and outrageous invective I could possibly extemporise. So far as I can remember, I began with : " You ineffable son of a gun." That last epithet proved most unsuitable, for the knocker would no longer either stand or lie under such wanton imputations. A voice was heard, irresistible by reason of its gentleness. The voice was not the voice of the Dublin undergraduate ; so I feverishly drew back the lock. And, lo ! a venerable and snowy-mantled form, perfectly recognisable, stood before me. He did not render railing for railing, but simply remonstrated : " You don't reflect that no one can get to sleep in the next room, whilst you are walking up and down like this." For " the ten-crib room " was next to that of the Governor.

From the considerate Governor I heard no more about it, for a fellow feeling made him wondrous kind. He himself had been one of the few men who had received their first appointment to the Circuit that sent them out. But the tender-hearted Mrs Morley did not let me off so easily. She took occasion at the breakfast-table to " point a moral." She turned to me with the most serious look, and said in an appropriate tone : " Mr Gregory, you are burning your candle at both ends, and putting a red-hot poker in the middle."

Mrs Morley's maternal solicitude began to vindicate itself much earlier than was expected. The symptoms of three years before returned with aggravated strength. An overwhelming languor was upon my frame, which nothing but a plunge into the then pellucid Aire could in the least relieve. I lost all power of continuous and concentrated thought. When I sat down to write a sermon, my mind would wander off indefinitely in all directions. I could not even pray for five minutes in succession except aloud, when the voice seemed to hold the mind to its present matter. At last, the sleep which I had shaken off so rudely, except at mornings, when having paid a lad to wake me, I paid him double to let me alone for another hour—" that gentle sleep " at last took umbrage and revenge. Alas ! I could not raise the Plantagenet's expostulation :—

" O gentle sleep ! how have I frighted thee ?
That thou no more dost weigh my eyelids down,
And steep my senses in forgetfulness."

I knew too well how many just occasions I had given sleep to sulk and not come near me. But for two of my

loving pupils, Joseph Shrewsbury and Robert N. Young, my tutorship must have collapsed. They helped me in hearing the other lads their lessons, and that in spite of the scathing scorn their fellow pupils paid them for their pains. My doctor, the thrice-admirable George Morley of Leeds, forbade me any further reading than such as would occupy and interest the mind without exhausting it. Just then there were two delightful books afloat of most edifying entertainment: Sharon Turner's *Sacred History of the Earth*, and the *Autobiography of Heinrich Stilling*. But even these proved all too much for me. Stilling's autobiography is, to my mind, in its practical, pietistic philanthropy, highly stimulating, whilst amusing in its quaint and sometimes queer ideas. Turner's charming book has long been superseded. For a time I nearly confined myself to light and elegant literature, first and best of all, Goldsmith's *Vicar of Wakefield*, one of the healthiest and most English tales that was ever written. It is the only book I ever took up without being able to lay it down until I had finished it. To read it I sat up most of the night, though so sorely in want of sleep. I next read some of Scott's finest tales, in both prose and poetry, beginning, at Coleridge's recommendation, with *Guy Mannering* and *Old Mortality*, and going on to *Rob Roy* and *The Antiquary*. I also read the then most popular tales of Mrs Morley's nephew, Samuel Warren, son of the famous Dr Warren: *Passages from the Diary of a Late Physician*, and *Ten Thousand a Year*. I also read with avidity *Blackwood*, *Fraser*, and the *Quarterly Review*. I finished Thiers' *French Revolution*, amusing myself and the boys in the top bedroom by narrating to them the chief events. On removing to the ten-crib room I resumed my old occupation of tale-telling, as much to the delight of my pupils as formerly of my school-fellows. Having been so engrossed in Thiers' book, I also read that noble masterpiece, *Burke on the French Revolution*, engraving on my memory and heart its finest principles. I was enchanted by Herschel's *Preliminary Discourse on the Study of Natural Philosophy*. It is masterly both in style and substance.

My imaginative reading could not fail to affect my style of preaching, which my superintendent regarded as far too florid and poetic. In truth, in one respect I was like the great preacher: I was always asking: "Whereunto shall I liken

this? . . . and with what comparison shall I compare it?" Mr Allen strongly advised me to abandon poetry for a time, although the chief charm of his own preaching was the bardic vein which ran through all. In deference to his judgement, I determined, at least for a while, to desist from perpetrating poetry.

But at last I quite broke down. One night the boys in the ten-crib room really thought I was dying, and Dr R. N. Young tells me that several of them spent the whole night in praying for my life. Dr Morley insisted on immediate change of scene and occupation, to begin with a week at his own house.

This was a discouraging beginning to an arduous ministry which has been permitted by the merciful Church and its most merciful Head to linger on for more than fifty-one years.¹

As my dear friend and co-tutor, John Smetham, was stationed at Leeds, and the distance between us was barely eight miles, we soon settled on a secluded spot in the delightful valley of the Aire, where we "strengthened each other's hands in God," went over together all our reading, planed down the oak-knots in our studies, discussed our colleagues and our congregations, and, in contrast with the trysting of Jonathan and David, had a good laugh instead of a good cry. But, alas! there came the "time to weep." Both of us had been so fascinated with Channing's *Essays*, with their green knolls and ferny glades and turret-topped palatial piles, that we rushed onwards to Channing's theological productions. My theological reading had driven in many a stout, close-set peg, that kept my tent from toppling over in stormy weather. But Smetham was completely obfuscated by Channing's plausible discourse on *Unitarian Christianity most favourable to Piety*; for, with the exception of the late John Lomas, of all the men I ever met John Smetham was the most impressed by the objections of an opponent. Yet this, I am bound to say, was obviously due far more to the amiability than to the inability of both these powerful men. Channing's discourse did pass by me "like the idle wind, which I regard not." His very first paragraph put him out of court altogether. He *began* by deliberately excluding Scripture as a ground of appeal. But, alas for me! Smetham put the points far more powerfully than Channing put them.

¹ *i.e.* in [1892].

So for one whole evening and night I was "full of tossings to and fro." For Smetham was completely enmeshed in the fine-spun sophistries of the eloquent Unitarian. Never till that time did I discover the Siamese twinship of our natures. Should he retain his recently adopted views he would assuredly resign the Wesleyan Methodist ministry; and what convinced him seemed wonderfully likely to convince me too. I re-read the sermon with no less eagerness than trepidation; and what was my relief to find that the oftener the discourse was read, the less was its plausibility! This was a great relief and release, as had Smetham and I continued in the mind which Smetham's letter expressed and had impressed on my own, both of us must have left the ministry and I must have left the Grove. I wrote at once to Smetham, pointing out that Channing's discourse was so far from being a triumph that it placed him in its first paragraph *hors de combat*, inasmuch as it declined the only lists within which the question could be tried, the authority of Holy Scripture, from which *alone* we derive the doctrine of the Trinity; that the appeal to *reason* is utterly harmless, forasmuch as the whole question of the internal relations of the Deity lies altogether beyond the province and the competence of Reason, Reason having neither the data nor the faculty for delineating those relations. I showed him that the way the Unitarians arrived at their dogma that "the greatest thinkers are Unitarians" is very straightforward and simple: they decree that no one who is not a Unitarian can possibly be a great thinker.

I must here mention a not unimportant event of my life—the watching the most marvellous vegetable phenomenon I have ever witnessed, except the aloe with its centenary crown. A neighbouring gentleman invited us to see the floral wonder, *the night-blowing cereus*. The unfolding and reclosing occupied some five hours, from seven P.M. to midnight; when fully expanded, it formed a magnificent chalice, the interior flushing with the most delicate, the richest, and most sumptuous hues, changing each moment as if by magic. It was a glorious spectacle, which could never fade from my memory.

The week spent at Leeds with Dr Morley, to enable him to study and to estimate my case, was a most influential period in my mental history. I had often been his patient, and had found him gentle and attentive in the highest degree: witness

the length of time which this vastly and variously preoccupied man would spend upon the festering, broken chilblains of a little lad. Those same digits after an interval of fifty-seven years record their gratitude. Dr Morley was a great reader of new books. Scarcely was there a volume of any interest or importance on either side of any great and special subject but Dr Morley secured it at the earliest possible date. He was a leading member of the Leeds literary circle, and of a Society for the discussion of the most pressing subjects. I had just been studying, with intense delight, Hartley Coleridge's *Poems*, which had been published at Leeds a few months before. He had resided in Leeds for some time, and he and Dr Morley had so often met that the latter could give the most charming illustrations of his genius and his eccentricities, and of his immense inheritance of conversational power.

But just then two opposite camps—Tractarianism, led by Newman, Pusey, Keble, Sewell, and Gladstone; and Transcendentalism led by such as Carlyle and Emerson—were in the fullness of their strength. Amongst Dr Morley's latest acquisitions had been some of Newman's sermons, Sewell on *Christian Morals*, Emerson's *Essays*, and Harris's *Great Teacher*, which his *Mammon* had rescued from obscurity. I found it a charming and suggestive work, displaying no small grasp and vigour, though here and there a ventriloquistic hint of rationalism rose up in subtle undertone, or glanced in questionable questions, like "wizards that peep and that mutter." But all this he soon outgrew. The scholarly simplicity and easy elegance of Newman from the very first bewitched me. Sewell was delectable, a kind of ecclesiastical Hazlitt, but did not fulfil the promise of his youth. His sermons, preached to the pupils of his large establishment at Radley, were a great falling off, as to both thought and language. The style of Emerson, too, I found most alluring and beguiling. During this delightful week I got through a smart bit of valuable reading, and still more valuable talking. Except at meal-times, Dr Morley's practice kept him out the livelong day, but, with one exception, he was in at nine, and stayed up till half-past two, discussing books and men and the course of public opinion for five hours and a half at a stretch. It was a great privilege to sit at Dr Morley's feet. Though far from being a great talker, even at his father's

table, no one could be more communicative and colloquial than was he when conversing with a friend at close of day and at dead of night upon congenial topics.

Five days of the week which I spent under Mr Morley's roof were dominated by as dense a fog as I ever witnessed in the day time, even in fog-famous London. So I was "stopped by the elements." But this imprisonment was no punishment to me, inasmuch as it afforded me a rich opportunity of reading the newest books by the ablest writers. On Sunday I heard two memorable preachers. In the morning, by the advice and in the company of Dr Morley, I went to hear the then famous Dr Hook, at that time the most talked-of clergyman in England. He was of sturdy build, and his delivery and diction were powerful and commanding. He was not eloquent, but his pronouncements were authoritative and peremptory. I could not have hit upon a better opportunity of hearing him. The collection was on behalf of his schools; and he took occasion to set forth the relations to the Church of every true churchman, from the font to the graveyard. He gave us his doctrine of the training of church-children and of adult churchmen. The whole sermon was the futile attempt to connect Evangelicalism with Ecclesiasticism, an attempt afterwards made by other able men, such as Samuel Wilberforce and Plumptre of Eastwood. His concluding sentence gave the clue to his entire system: "What, then, does the churchman rely upon in death? He can say to his Maker, I have not lived up to privileges [a phrase borrowed from the Evangelicals], but, trusting in Christ, and *especially* in His holy sacraments, I hope to be saved."

In the evening, by Dr Morley's advice, I went to hear Dr Richard Winter Hamilton, whose book on Prayer had so edified and charmed me. Oh, what a contrast to Hook! Hamilton had all the pastoral dignity of Hook, and he had also the superiority in range and depth, in direct appeal "to every man's conscience in the sight of God." Dr Hamilton was not only superior in power of thought and richness of expression, but, still better, in Scripture truth and faithful warning of all who "neglect so great salvation." Hamilton's text was: "And the God in whose hand thy breath is, and whose are all thy ways, hast thou not glorified" (as he spoke it, in his uncouth, cockney dialect, "glowrified"). That sermon

has been to me an inestimable blessing as an individual believer and as a preacher. Hamilton had the reputation of being the most grandiose of all the writers of his time. This originated in a sermon published in his early ministry on occasion of the execution of more than thirty young men, on conviction of conspiracy against the Government, abounding in most pompous passages, such as that beginning thus: "Who would add momentum to an avalanche precipitated from the Andes?" His subsequent writing, including a volume of very strong and striking sermons, sustained his reputation for grandiloquence. But judging from the sermon which I heard him preach in his own chapel to his own people, this stilted step and this rhetorical costume, like Assyrian "cohorts," all "gleaming with purple and gold," formed a state dress, put on for state occasions. Dr Hamilton's intimate connection with Methodism in his youth had wrought in him a warm attachment to that Church. He never lightly refused to attend a Wesleyan Methodist meeting, and often protested in public, "It is much less my fault than my misfortune that I am not a Methodist."

The result of a week's close study of my case convinced Dr Morley that the best thing for me would be a month in the country, with as much change of scene and rest of mind as could be readily attained. I naturally thought of my uncle in Lincolnshire, whose house was the centre of a cheery settlement of my father's friends. I was subjected to rather drastic treatment by the Squire-doctor Cumpstone, having leeches applied to my head instead of hot water to my feet. But I soon became able to take long walks and long drives. I visited Louth, with its surpassing spire. At Horncastle, another of my father's Circuits, I preached once on two successive Sundays, and was made much of, for my father's sake, by the leading Methodist families. I stayed with the choicest of them all, the Dixons, one of whom was the exquisite miniature-portrait painter, Annie Dixon. I formed also many valuable friendships, such as the Holdsworths, afterwards of Birmingham, and the future president, Joseph Bush, then a youth of some fifteen years. I visited Spilsby, staying at the neighbouring Danby, with another connection of mine, a wealthy farmer, with whom I went out coursing, for the only time in my life, and found it a most exciting and absorbing enterprise.

I spent Christmas Day, 1840, at the house of Mr Adams, of Torrington. It was a fine family gathering of four brothers or brothers-in-law, with their wives. My uncle drove me over, some eight miles. After tea he remarked: "Now we have spent a most pleasant day, enjoyed a sumptuous repast and delightful conversation, but each of us has been prevented from attending any service. What if we have singing and prayer, and my nephew give us a short homily?" All agreed. When the little drawing-room service was over, my uncle, who was Circuit-steward, said: "You know that a Christmas service without a collection is a strange thing in Methodism, and we have a Circuit debt of £50, and are at our wit's end how to get rid of it. What if we have a collection for the Circuit debt?" To which proposal Mr Adams answered: "Well, we have all had a good year. I'll willingly give £10 as a thank-offering. I am sure Mr Towler will not stick at another £10, and my brothers will, I have no doubt, do the like." The motion was carried by acclamation, and the Circuit debt melted like snow in the genial warmth.

As my most serious symptom, sleeplessness, had not abated, both Dr Morley and Dr Cumpstone insisted on my taking further rest and change; and as Dr Morley informed his father, the Governor, that the date of my return to Woodhouse Grove was very uncertain, the Committee were obliged to appoint a successor. I spent the three months of savage winter—1840—amongst the cosy, hospitable Methodist farmsteads of Lincolnshire. Mr Wesley testified that of all the English shires his native county was the most hospitable. This testimony I can endorse as the result of a rather wide induction.

At the close of the three months I betook myself to my father's cot in Belper. Even in 1841 it was impossible to reach Belper from Market Rasen in a day. I was obliged to spend a night in Nottingham. Home-rest and springtide, spent in long luxurious walks and occasional excursions, in due time restored me. I preached two sermons in the St Helen's Circuit, and spent some days at St Helen's. This gave me my first sight of the enchanting country between Matlock and Stockport. With Matlock and its caves I had before been familiar. But now I passed through Darley Dale, Bakewell, Ashford-on-the-Waters, Buxton, and Bullock Smithy—soon after metamorphosed into Hazel Grove—which Thomas Hood

has made immortal. We also drove through Stockport, then one vast, grim, suburbless slum. I was continually expecting to come into the *town*, until I found that we had driven right through the place and come out into the country. What a contrast, not only to towns like Nottingham, Derby and Hull, but also to Leeds and Sheffield! Even then the approach to Manchester and the centre of the city were very impressive. I also spent a grand day at Haddon Hall and Chatsworth, a charming contrast between picturesque mediæval magnificence and the palatial stateliness of modern times. The view, from the entrance of Chatsworth Park, of the long, white, majestic pile, with its dark background of wooded hill, is most effective. But what I mentally carried away with me, and still retain, is the sculpture, particularly Thorwaldsen's masterpieces.

I spent in the Belper Circuit some six months, dividing my time between home and my many relatives and friends, especially amongst my rich cluster of homes at Heanor, and the delightful family of Mr Joseph Bourne, of Denby Pottery.

Of course I had to answer to my name, and to renew my pledges, first to "our doctrines" and next to "our discipline," at the Leeds District Committee in 1841, which was held in Pontefract. On my way I took two services at Garforth, a little parish town, seven miles from Leeds, my friend Smetham being one of my hearers. Garforth Methodism was at that time as the garden of the Lord, well watered everywhere. It was redolent of the memory and teeming with the converts of Sammy Hick, Billy Dawson, and David Stoner. As usual, in preaching to a congregation of mine own countrymen, I had two warm triumphant times.

We reached Pontefract in time for the afternoon missionary meeting—an ever-memorable gathering. The two great speeches were those of Billy Dawson and Alexander Bell—the most famous and effective of all Dawson's platform deliverances—his *telescopic* speech. Coiling up his resolution into the shape of a spyglass, he described in the most animated, energetic, vivid style, characteristic scenes of existing heathenism, asking before each description: "What do I see?" Then, turning in another direction, he demanded: "But what do I see in the distant prospect?" He then depicted the most graphic scenes of millennial peace and love and glory. Of course, his real telescope for "the distant prospect" was the mighty tube of Prophecy.

This was the last opportunity I ever had of hearing the most distinguished local preacher with whom Methodism was ever blessed ; within a year and a month he was called to yet higher service.

The other never-to-be-forgotten speech was from Alexander Bell, replete with the raciest, healthiest, the best-natured and most practical humour. He had one marvellous power which I have never noted in any other man—at least in anything like the same degree—the emission of a sort of irresistible and almost mesmeric influence.

In the evening, after the meeting, Dr Newton preached the missionary sermon, choosing the most majestically delivered of all his homilies, that from “Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord.” The way in which he uttered such phrases as “the pigmy philosopher” was the very culmination of oratorical dignity and force.

The assembly which met next morning as the Leeds District Committee formed an imposing body of Christian ministers. The chairman was Dr Newton, the grandest figure and the best-beloved preacher in the whole Connexion. He was then President for the third time. The District Committee comprised many other ministers of mark, such as John Bowers, a future President, and Governor at Didsbury ; Thomas Galland ; Joseph Cusworth, afterwards Governor of Kingswood ; a young man named Alfred Barrett, already famous by his *Prize Essay on the Pastoral Office*, and endeared to his brethren and his successive flocks by his exemplary modesty and self-suppression, the gentleness and refinement of his manners, and the richness of his teaching both in pulpit and in Bible-class ; John Smetham, a young probationer of immense promise and capacity, soon to fall before the scythe of death ; Alexander Strachan, whom Dr Bunting pronounced a preacher of the first rank—a keen and wary Scot, with a pronounced Hebrew contour—the biographer of the missionary Leigh, and the father of Dr Strachan, Bishop of Rangoon ; Wilson Brailsford, afterwards the consummate superintendent and chairman of a district ; Charles Radcliffe, next to Philip Garrett, and W. Beal, the most scientific man in the Methodist ministry, father of the celebrated West-end physician, Charles B. Radcliffe, of Cavendish Square ; Hodgson Casson, the revivalist and humorist ; and two right famous

missionaries—Barnabas Shaw, of Africa, and Thomas Cryer, of India. Unhappily for me, Mr ex-President Morley was detained at Woodhouse Grove by illness.

The sermon to the district meeting was preached by Thomas Galland, in his very highest style of masterly and massive exposition, the text being, "Now the Lord is that Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty." It was a noble manifesto to a body of Christian ministers.

Little did I think that I was destined to play a prominent and unenviable part in the proceedings of this memorable meeting. The episode I am about to relate it is necessary to record, not only as a most important part of my own ministerial history, but also as "figuring the nature of the times deceased," and as bringing out certain qualities of some of our most remarkable men of half-a-century ago. As I was nearing the chapel in company with Smetham and Barrett, the superintendent of the Circuit accosted me with the information that Mr P., a highly popular minister, who was announced to preach at five o'clock the next morning, had been summoned to the death-bed of his father, and that the President, being asked to appoint me to take his place, had consented. In vain I protested. The thing was final. Mr Barrett did his best to hearten me, assuring me that there was nothing formidable in a service at five o'clock A.M., and Smetham said, "You may be thankful if you get more than fifty or sixty sleepy people. Give us what you gave at Garforth last Sunday, and it will go like wildfire."

It should be remembered that I was, by years, the youngest man in the district, being close on six months short of coming of age, and was barely convalescent from a prolonged and critical disease.

We were, of course, late home, as the Lord's Supper was administered after a long and late-beginning service, to all the ministers and a very large number of lay communicants. I comforted myself with the assurance that Mr Galland, after such an exercise, would not trouble himself to rise at four o'clock to hear a whipper-snapper like myself. The younger brother of my host had engaged to give me an effectual call at four o'clock precisely.

Alas! for me I took him at his own honest word. If I had kept my case in my own hand, all would have been right;

for from my youth up I have possessed in perfection that, to me, altogether inscrutable faculty of which Miss Cobbe has treated with much rare physiological ingenuity, under the name of *Unconscious Cerebration*: the faculty of waking to the minute at a time fixed on in my mind the night before. The year before at Leeds, when I had to be examined at five A.M., I woke after a profound sleep with an amusing yet amazing precision. But knowing that my friend was habitually an early bird, I trusted him implicitly, and gave my poor spent brain no special orders.

Next morning I was roused from a profound sleep by the agitated shout of the younger Mr Wordsworth, "Oh! it only wants twenty minutes to five!" My friend poured on me profuse and unhelpful apologies. I gasped, "Oh! don't talk to me, please! I must pray all the time I'm dressing and running to the chapel." We were a good ten minutes' sedate walk from the chapel, but I tore away at the top of my speed, gave the hymns to the leading singer, climbed the tall pulpit with the clock staring me in the face at five minutes past five, and unfeeling preachers glancing alternately from the clock face to mine. To my consternation, instead of Smetham's "fifty or sixty sleepy people," I found before me a congregation of several hundreds, and, as it seemed to me, the District Meeting in almost full session. I saw that my sermon was exquisitely unsuitable. Whilst giving out the first hymn I ran over all my little lot of texts to see which of them would be less out of keeping with my imposing audience. But, like the sons of Jesse before Samuel, they all passed by rejected. This was a mistake, as I saw afterwards that my sermon on "Have faith in God," or that on "If a man love Me, he will keep My words," etc., would have met the approval of the Conscript Fathers. But I had not self-command enough to make the change. I saw that my only chance was to ignore the ministers altogether and address myself directly and solely to the mass of the people. I had a good time in prayer and in reading the lesson. My text was, "Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee; because thou hast left thy first love." The MS. has long ago been "fairly worn out in the Master's service," and I can remember little but the outline. I began by dwelling on the love of God to man as revealed in His warm appreciation of man's love to Him—as the greatest of all the revealed

mysteries. I touched upon His love to the sinner. One sentence I remember: "At the very idea of a sinner's final abandonment, the Eternal Heart heaves and is convulsed; the infinite sympathies take fire and conflagrate. 'How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? How shall I deliver thee, Judah? My heart is turned within Me; My repentings are kindled together.'" I touched upon the *jealousy* of God as the very zenith of this glorious revelation; on the sensitiveness of the All-sufficient to the lowering temperature of the affection of a human heart; His

". . . agonising sense
Of seeing love, from passion, melt
Into indifference."

I quoted the heart-breaking appeal of the prophet: "I remember thee, the kindness of thy youth and the love of thine espousals, when thou wentest after Me," with the echo in my context, "Remember, therefore, from whence thou art fallen." The core of the discourse was an expatiation on the lines:—

"What tongue can express
The sweet comfort and peace
Of a soul in its earliest love!"

I described vividly and with picturesque illustration "the blessedness I knew, when first I saw the Lord," for it was all drawn from personal experience. "Behold! all things are become new." This "newness of life" I depicted as the spring-time of the fruits of the Spirit; finishing with:—

"God's love it did your heart o'erpower,
And all your simple soul devour."

The sermon was emitted in a white heat of emotion and imaginative ecstasy. But unfortunately, towards the close, I gave play to my pictorial proclivities. To illustrate the *abandon* of the first love as breaking through all conventionalities and making straight for its Redeemer, to pour all its treasured vanities and all the fullness of its broken heart upon its Saviour's feet, I drew, it must be confessed, a vivid and highly coloured picture of the "woman that was a sinner" in the house of the Pharisee. No sooner had I committed myself to this description than, to my horror, in strode the President. I knew too well that this sort of thing was his aversion, unless it were rendered in a

rough-and-ready style. I saw his superb face gathering blackness. Besides, his very apparition warned me that in ten minutes' time the district meeting must begin. So, my picture finished, I dropped my application—the most powerful part of the discourse, gave out a verse, and pronounced the benediction. Ah! that five minutes lost at the beginning!

I had the people with me from first to last. There was no shouting, but much weeping; but I knew too well that I had evidently, by my juvenile efflorescence, shocked the severe classic taste of Galland and the stern English taste of Newton. Before I tell what took place in the District Committee anent that poor little early morning homily, I must premise two facts: (1) There was not the faintest reflection on my doctrine, which was admitted to be purely and intensely Methodist. Had there been any recreancy to the doctrinal pledges which I had given the year before, no causticity of censure could have been too biting for such an inexcusable violation of morality. (2) Of all the men or women I have ever been acquainted with, not one could compete with me in enthusiastic admiration of Robert Newton, as a man and as an orator. Robert Newton was an honour to his species. His treatment of me at my first district meeting was acknowledged by all who witnessed it as an inexplicable solecism in his history.

When my book-list was read, up rose Mr Galland, and with all the gravity and gentleness befitting an elder, expressed his deep disappointment at the sermon he had heard from me. Having known me so long, and examined me as a scholar and my work as a tutor for so many years in succession, he thought it his duty to express an earnest hope that I should abandon a style of composition for the pulpit which bore such slight traces of a familiarity with classic models. The very hopes which he had cherished with regard to me obliged him to entreat me to abandon the florid and unchastened diction into which I had allowed my imagination to betray me.

Of course I rose and stood meekly whilst the great expositor and scholar gave me such befitting admonition. I felt that every word of it was true, and that, as my superintendent said, it contained much more of encouragement and compliment than of criticism and of admonition; I stood with a feeling of "genuine, meek humility," which bordered on abjection, and was preparing to admit the justice and the

kindness of Mr Galland's strictures, and to put in a plea for leniency and forbearance on the ground of my extreme juvenility, the long and trying illness from which I was scarcely convalescent, and the suddenness of my appointment without time for the slightest preparation, so that I was obliged to fall back upon the sermon which I had then most at command. But before I could articulate a syllable, the President brought to bear upon me the whole battery of his sarcastic oratory. Every sentence was a barbed and brine-steeped arrow. He had only heard me for five minutes at the most, but he fiercely assailed my delivery. As to that, it were surely no discredit to a tyro of twenty if his delivery were disconcerted or even distorted by the sudden entrance of one of the greatest and truest pulpit orators of the age.

When he had done with my delivery, I began to reply in the tone and terms of indignation to the degrading language which he had thought fit to select. I took up his last stinging epithet and showed how cruelly irrelevant it was in the circumstances of the case. Happily, as I stood at the extreme end of a long room, and as my voice was faint and faltering, and stuck to my jaws through agitation, the President did not catch my first sentence. And happily, again, Thomas Cryer, who had characteristically "chosen the lowest room," and refused to "come up higher," and so sat at the very end of the table, put his hand gently upon mine, and lifted up to mine his saintly face and shook his head, and put a finger on his lips. There was no resisting that appeal; so I became at once "as one in whose mouth there are no reproofs."

The President also censured my book-list in the strongest terms. With more frankness than discretion, I had included in my list the second volume of Channing's Works. But it was the absence of works which I had mastered before I entered the ministry which specially conducted the lightning of his wrath.

When he ceased, Mr Bowers, himself a great elocutionist, defended my delivery, and—a great stylist—maintained that my diction being that of a very young man was most befitting to a man so young. Others followed on my side. The next day Smetham came to me and said, "I've just been in company with Newton, Galland, and Billy Dawson; and the first thing Billy said to them was, 'So they tell me you fell

foul of that imaginative young fellow. Ah, well, pare him down, and by the time he is as old as you are, he'll be about as dry as you are.'"

My book-list, it must be admitted, was unusual in its contents. But it was not reasonable to expect or require me to re-read year after year books with which I was already familiar, just for the sake of presenting an approved catalogue. Nevertheless, it contained some invaluable works. Among these were Bishop Butler's *Sermons*. The reading of these wonderful discourses, like the reading of the *Analogy*, makes an epoch in the intellectual life of a student of theology and philosophy, as their publication marked an era in the history of Moral Philosophy. Then I had Chalmers' *On the Adaptation of External Nature to the Moral and Intellectual Constitution of Man*, a book as valuable from a doctrinal as from an ethical point of view. I had also Dean Stanhope's exquisite edition of Thomas à Kempis, with an introduction which forms one of the choicest gems of English mystic pietism. Besides this, I had most carefully read the entire massive work of Macknight *On the Epistles*, with the Greek Text. These books alone, as Mr Bowers pointed out, formed no discreditable eight months' reading for a youth in a state of nervous breakdown. Macknight on the *Romans* is very faulty; but his expositions of the *Corinthians*, the *Hebrews*, *James* and *1 Peter* are still worth reading. I had also read with much advantage the Rev. Alfred Barrett's prize essay on the *Christian Pastorate*. It is thoroughly Scriptural, and quite free from the tinge of ecclesiasticism in his later work. In those days there was no prescribed reading for probationers, though there was much prescribed reading.

I saw a great deal of Dr Newton in after years as he visited my various Circuits. I heard every one of his famous sermons. He never made any direct reference to the Pontefract affair. Four years afterwards, however, I was dining with him and a number of distinguished ministers at the house of a member of my flock at Great Queen Street, when the conversation drifted in the direction of the Methodist worthies at the beginning of the century. With great gusto Dr Newton told us: "The first sermon I ever preached at Conference John Pawson attacked the next morning in Conference in the most vehement style. He could find no fault with my doctrine, but my English and

my action he could not away with." The Rev. John Rigg (Dr Rigg's father), who had heard of the Pontefract business, turned round to me and said slyly : " So you see, Mr Gregory, the good old preachers of Dr Newton's youth could be very severe on the language and the manner of the young ones." Dr Newton was sitting opposite to me, our eyes met ; he was evidently *taken aback*, but he said nothing ; and I, Napoleon-wise, divested my countenance of all expression whatsoever.

It was not such an ill wind as to blow me no good. When the lay portion of my audience heard of the castigation I had suffered, a veritable "spate" of sympathy burst forth. I received such a quantity of pocket-handkerchiefs and neckerchiefs (Methodist ministers went collarless in those days) as kept me well supplied for the whole term of my probation, besides other substantial testimonials.

Though depressed and shaken by my castigation at the district meeting, I felt bound to fulfil an engagement of some standing, to take part in the missionary Anniversary at Wakefield. I had to preach there once on the Sunday following the district meeting, and to speak at the three meetings held during the week. I received a rich guerdon for my poor labours, being brought into close association with three eminent ministers, and securing two homes in that highly interesting town. Wakefield was wont to make a great affair of its Missionary Anniversary. I had the rare privilege of hearing and staying at the same house with three preachers who were then in the meridian of their popularity and power : John M'Lean, Dr Dixon, and Thomas Cryer.

M'Lean's sermon was beyond compare the finest, both in substance and delivery, I ever heard him preach. His text was, " God forbid that I should glory save in the cross," etc. It repaid all my little services to hear him give out his first hymn :—

" My heart is full of Christ, and longs
Its glorious matter to declare," etc.

M'Lean was a high-class preacher. His physical advantages were great ; his tall, shapely, military figure, his clear, sonorous, flexible and tuneful voice, his musical Scotch cadences, and his classical Scotch accent, made still more effective his easy, natural, yet withal manful, animated, and becoming action.

His language was the perfection of simplicity ; his message was the unmutilated, unmanipulated Gospel. His popularity was as legitimate and as inevitable as it was widespread and intense. He was a perfect gentleman in company : gentlemanly, gentle-voiced, "swift to hear, slow to speak," and deferential to every one who sat at meat with him.

Dr Dixon's short, monosyllabic text, "And there shall be no more curse," was exactly suited to his genius. He was the most monosyllabic speaker and talker that I ever met with. This gave to his sentences a matchless strength. If you want a sturdy, telling style of speaking, choose not only plain words, but short ones also. His very first passage called up before the imagination some awe-inspiring scene of ancient grandeur like "Tadmor in the wilderness," a monument of the great forces of construction followed by destruction. Its sweep of thought, its profound and pulsing yet restrained and manly pathos, and "the still, sad music of humanity" which was its constant undertone, were inexpressibly affecting and impressive. The associations of the place and the memories of the past had unsealed the deepest hot-springs of his lofty nature. Wakefield was to him the most endeared and hallowed scene of all his changeful pilgrimage. Here he had lost and left behind the wife of his youth. The sympathy of his people with his suffering saint, their "kindness to the dead," and their loyalty to the living, had woven round his heart a silken yet imperishable bond. Hence the confidential, tender tone of his deliverance. I had never seen him before. That grand head of his, those statuesque and yet expressive features, those deep and flashing eyes, that voice as of a priest enunciating oracles, had a distancing yet drawing influence, as of some strange magnetic force. Then began on my part a timid, tentative approach which, through the years, became a frank yet reverential familiarity. To be an inmate of the same house with Thomas Cryer was a delightful means of grace.

At the meetings the veteran missionary Shrewsbury represented the West Indies and South Africa, as Cryer told of our missions in "the gorgeous East," and Mr Bowers stirred the fire of missionary sentiment. Then, as later, the Missionary Breakfast was a splendid institution, quite as beneficial to the local as to the foreign Church. It was a festive gathering of our families and friends, where we did all eat and drink before the

Lord as at some ancient Hebrew feast. Besides the choice material viands, we enjoyed "the feast of reason and the flow of soul," and "did all eat the same spiritual meat, and drink the same spiritual drink."

Certainly the raw probationer of fifty years ago had no lack of models of powerful, telling, high-class Gospel preaching. Not that there was a Solomonic profusion of men of surpassing pulpit-power. Our "cedars" were not "as the sycamore trees that were in the vale for abundance"; nor were "silver" speeches and sermons "as plentiful as stones." But we had many "trees of the Lord, full of sap, cedars of Lebanon, which He had planted"; and, as "preachers of the Gospel," "our fathers" were such as their children, or even their grandchildren, are not entitled to despise.

From Wakefield I returned to Pontefract, being retained for a month to relieve Barnabas Shaw—who was just then almost disabled from pulpit work—and to take part in the series of May missionary meetings in the country, and to preach Sunday school sermons. For being just then "at a loose end," I became a sort of "jobbing" Methodist preacher, ready for odds and ends of emergent service.

It was no small gain to a probationer in his first year to enjoy a month's close intercourse with our first missionary to South Africa: the man who, first by his letters and then by his speeches, enkindled and sustained the missionary enthusiasm of Methodism. The true heart of a missionary beat within the breast and shook the fragile frame of that heroic saint. When he reached Africa, "by faith he refused to be" merely or mainly the chaplain to the colonists, maintaining that he was sent out as a missionary to the heathen, and that whatever ministrations he might be able to render to those who knew the Gospel already were only collateral and secondary to his efforts to convert the savages to Christ.

As Barnabas Shaw always walked with me to his near appointments, and drove me to his distant ones, I had long talks with that hero-hearted, humble-minded pioneer missionary. I found him one of God's choice spirits, and gathered from him much invaluable information as to the actual state of the heathen mind before one ray of revealed truth has reached it. All he told me was afterwards confirmed by William Shaw and William B. Boyce. It gave short shrift to all that

I had been led to fancy as to "the light of nature." I also heard the famous speech with which he had thrilled the Methodism of the United Kingdom, of which the plaintive refrain was, "Pity poor Africa!"

In the villages of the Pontefract and many other Circuits the missionary meeting was the great event of the year, the trysting-time of Christian friendships; and as we had delightful company to and from the town, and were entertained in comfortable farmsteads, a succession of these gatherings afforded as pleasant and as edifying a mode of spending the merry month of May as can well be conceived. The most memorable of all these meetings was that held at Kirk Smeaton, a village which looks down upon the loveliest dell in the West Riding. Here I first met one of the most noteworthy and most estimable personages with whom I ever came in contact, Henry Reed, of Tasmania. Smeaton was the native place of his devoted Methodist mother, and we spent the day together at the farmstead from which his mother was married. I preached in the afternoon, having him for a hearer, he being then an ardent and successful evangelist. He took the chair at the evening meeting. His physique was most imposing; he was very tall and powerfully built, with bushy locks, not, as in later life, spare and grizzled. His commanding countenance bore the tan of travel, and had a dauntless leonine expression. He was then only thirty-five years old, but was already very rich. I never saw a man so absorbed in his religion; his whole air and converse breathed the spirit of the lines:—

"Nor will we know,
Nor will we think of aught beside,
'My Lord, my Love is crucified.'"

In his presence one could but feel "How awful goodness is!"

I must here record one of the most cheering incidents of my ministerial life. Norton, the village for the Sunday school of which I preached, being several miles from Pontefract, Mr Brice, a druggist of the town, lent his horse and gig and his young assistant to take me to the place. On my way I talked with him, as became a Methodist minister. I asked him whether he had given his heart to God. He frankly answered, "Not yet fully." I asked him whether he had a godly mother. He answered with emotion, "If there ever was one." I pressed

him tenderly to yield himself to Christ without delay. He promised to think more seriously about it than he had yet done.

Twenty-four years later, when I had the honour of accompanying President William Shaw on his visit to Scotland, I was entertained in Edinburgh at the beautiful and most beautifully situated house of Mr Taylor. My host, on greeting me, remarked: "I see you don't remember me." "No," I said; "I really don't." "Do you remember, then, preaching, in the first year of your ministry, for the Sunday school at Norton?" "I do; and you were the young man who took me there from Pontefract." "Do you remember how tenderly you talked to me about my soul and my godly home?" "I do." "Well, that proved the turning point in my religious life. I could not get away from your words. They just touched the right chord." I found my friend, next to Sir James Falshaw, the pillar of our Church in Edinburgh. Throughout my course, as a "fisher of men," I have been at least as successful by the hook as by the draw-net.

The month I spent at Pontefract was most exciting. The critical election of 1841 was in full swing. The market-place was almost continuously re-echoing to the melodious peal of the old church bells. A sharper contrast can scarcely be conceived than the two successful candidates presented to each other: the poet-politician Richard Monckton Milnes, Lord Houghton, one of the most refined and cultivated literary men of the day, and, as a poet, one of the brightest stars that then "flamed in the forehead of the morning sky"; and Gully, the boxer, who had won an enormous fortune in the ring and on the turf. Milnes left all the electioneering work and the *doing the amiable* to the voters, to his father, the once famous Pemberton Milnes, one of the very few first-rate statesmen who, in the full tide of success, and with the clearest prospects and the highest gifts, retired from public life and gave himself up to the amenities of the country life of an English gentleman. I was glad of the opportunity of observing this notable personage, as he loitered in the market-place and made himself accessible to all comers. Gully was much the more effective speaker of the two successful candidates. His physique was splendid, and his attitude and action those of a pugilist. He soon resigned his seat.

I read at this time, with great zest, Monckton Milnes' first

volume of poems, which were full of a rich promise, being marked by exquisite delicacy of sentiment and subtlety of fancy and of phrase, especially his *Lay of the Humble* and his legend of St Patrick. But, alas! he never fulfilled the promise of his youth either as politician or as poet. He got entangled in the meshes of a speculative scepticism, and sank into an ephemeral essayist and a talker to the favoured few. Nevertheless his fine *Life of Keats* must be placed to his credit.

On the Sunday after leaving Pontefract I preached at Doncaster, staying with my dear old school-fellow, Joseph Heap, joint-principal of the famous school at *Edenfield House*. To my feeling the place was rightly named. Subsequently, under the principalship of Mr Lane, the school became one of the best and most popular academies in Yorkshire.

I found Doncaster in a state of even intenser excitement than that in which I had left Pontefract. To the borough elections had succeeded a tremendous contest for the representation of the West Riding. At no subsequent period have I seen anything to compare with it. The election of 1841 was epochal: from it really dates the metamorphosis of the Tories into Conservatives, and that of the Whigs into Liberals. Peel's speech at Tamworth was the manifesto which proclaimed the new party. That speech made a deep impression on the country and on my own mind. Peel's ensuing administration formed the first Conservative Government. I heard at Doncaster two famous speakers of the time: Lord Morpeth (afterwards Earl of Carlisle), one of the candidates, and James Silk Buckingham. Lord Morpeth completely realised my ideal of a popular English nobleman. His dignity of bearing and his stately and yet scholarly eloquence completely overawed interruption and uproar. Buckingham, the great traveller and journalist, was the starter, the editor, and virtually the proprietor of the *Athenæum*, and ex-M.P. for Sheffield. Despite the contempt of the *Times*, which used to call him James *Fustian* Buckingham, he was a most fascinating speaker. There was a silken sheen and smoothness in his eloquence which refuted and rebuked the depreciatory pun.

The next Sunday I spent at Rotherham with my old friend and patron, Thomas Edwards, senr. He too was a memorable minister of Christ. The son of a wealthy clergyman, and with a benefice awaiting him, he had given up all to be a Methodist

preacher. For a time he was one of our missionary secretaries, but returned to Circuit work.

On this Sunday I heard two never-to-be-forgotten sermons, from the same text, on the same melancholy occasion, from two very diverse preachers. A few days previously Rotherham had been the scene of a terrible catastrophe. A splendid barge had been launched upon the Don, the deck being thronged by more than a hundred young people belonging to the leading families of the town, all in holiday attire and in the highest glee. "All went merry as a marriage bell." But just at the critical moment of launching something occurred which made the excited young people crowd to one side of the barge. It instantly over-heelled, and more than fifty youths and maidens, just half the number on board, were drowned, being held under water by the capsized barge. Of course sermons were preached at all the churches and chapels with reference to this heart-rending event. I heard Samuel M'All, brother of the more popular Dr M'All of Manchester. Samuel M'All at that time held a post in the Rotherham Independent College. In style he presented a striking contrast to his brother, and to my view was greatly his superior. M'All of Manchester was a consummate rhetorician; M'All of Rotherham was a genuine orator. His text on this occasion was, "In Rama was there a voice heard, lamentation, and weeping, and great mourning, Rachael weeping for her children, and would not be comforted, because they are not." His pathos was overwhelming, and yet not overdone. There was no "tearing a passion to tatters." His descriptive power was very great. Perhaps he had been among the multitude who were witnesses of the scene. He depicted the gay vessel, brilliantly painted, and with its many coloured pennons gleaming in the sunshine and flapping in the breeze, and with its bright-eyed and light-hearted freight of youth. "Who could have thought," he asked, "that the vessel was under the command of the Angel of Death?" His concluding sentence was, "O merciful God! if this do not awake us, what must Thou try next?"

In the Wesleyan Methodist chapel in the evening the then famous James Bromley took the same touchingly appropriate text. His personal appearance was highly prepossessing. He had a fine figure, carefully attired in clerical costume. And his face was even finer than his figure. Its expression was highly intellectual, and seemed to bear the stamp of culture,

although suffused with a rich English bloom. He was indeed a very presentable personage. His easy and becoming elocution, however, was sadly marred by a nasal twang which seemed to be acquired, if not affected ; yet it was wonderfully suited to his most characteristic deliverances in the pulpit, on the platform, and in conversation and discussion, but not to his reading of the Scriptures, which, despite this irritating drawback, was most effective : he brought out the rhythm of our English version charmingly.

Returning to my father's cottage at Belper, I devoted the remaining weeks of my holiday mainly to the study of English literature. In this department of study I was placed by Providence under a consummate master, the Rev. Josiah Goodwin, at that time superintendent of the Belper Circuit. He not only guided me in the choice of modern British Classics, but supplied me with the greater part of them from his own rich library. In this service he was aided by his accomplished daughter, and by his cultivated son, my old school-fellow, Thomas B. Goodwin, who at that time visited his parents. I began with Southey's *Book of the Church*, which I cannot but regard as a finer specimen of style than any of his earlier and better known productions, and surpassed only by his gem-like *Life of Watts*. I proceeded next to Sir James Mackintosh's *History of England*, then to Professor Wilson's *Lights and Shadows of Scottish Life*, anon to Sir Walter Scott's *History of Scotland*, and then—most charming book of all—to Bishop Heber's *Life of Jeremy Taylor*. It were a thousand pities that such literary gems "of purest ray serene" should be allowed to sink into "the dark, unfathomed caves" of "dumb forgetfulness." Mackintosh's *History of England*, written late in life, is the one among his many works which justifies his reputation. His earlier style is too ambitious and rhetorical, but, in the *History*, language ripples musically from the "pure well of English undefyled," and flows onward in a calm, pellucid stream. In *Lights and Shadows*, Professor Wilson's diction retains its tender, early bloom, delicate as "the down of damsons." Scott's *Scotland* has all the simple elegance of the opening chapters of his *Waverley* or *Bride of Lammermoor*. Heber's *Taylor* is not only a masterpiece of poetic prose, but as a historic monograph is of great value.

I next revelled in Dugald Stewart's *Dissertation on the*

Progress of Philosophy, as literature rather than as metaphysics. Though Stewart did but little to advance ontological science, he did much to trace its progress, and, as a contribution to the history of human thought, his work was, in both style and substance, immeasurably ahead of the only book of the kind which had yet come in my way, Enfield's *History of Philosophy*.

At this time, too, I read another Scottish master of the English language, another poet who was strong in prose, Dr Beattie. His *Essay on Truth* I found to be a delicious book, worthy of the author of *The Minstrel*, which I read as its accompaniment. Beattie is a devout and spiritual philosopher, and rests his system on the rock of Christian experience as well as on that of human consciousness. The three golden-penned Scotch professors—Chalmers, Stewart, Beattie—did not make me a thorough convert to the Scotch Philosophy—the Philosophy of *Common Sense*—and as a *philosophy*, I found it far from satisfying. It convinced, indeed, like Butler, of the trustworthiness of our senses and our faculties, duly checked and corrected by each other, for all practical purposes. But it was far from assuring me of the competence, or even the aptitude, of our bodily senses and our mental faculties combined to construct a real *Science of Being*.

Another most delectable book I feasted on at this time was Mason's *Life of Gray*. Gray's *Letters* prove him to have been not only as great an artist in prose as in poetry, but also a sound and deep theological and moral thinker, and a graceful yet audacious humorist. Moreover, Gray was the first English traveller on the Continent who did full justice to the scenery and antiquities of his native land. His description of Malham and Gorsdale, and the rise of the river Aire, is more enthusiastic than his picture of Tivoli; and his visit to Hardwicke Hall was evidently more enjoyed than his inspection of any Italian villa or palace, in company with the clever coxcomb, Horace Walpole.

Nor must I here omit one of the true classics of America—Fenimore Cooper—whose two *best-written* Tales, *The Spy* and *The Wept of Wish-ton-Wish* (since entitled *The Heath-cotes*), I read at this time. As choice specimens of English prose, they far surpass his more popular sensational romances, and form a not unworthy link between Washington Irving's earliest compositions and the easy, exquisite English of Ban-

croft, Motley, Hawthorne, Holmes, and Lowell. Lamb and Landor had not yet come in my way. I also read, with the same purpose, the entire works of Byron and of Shelley. Though, of course, disgusted with the flippant irreligion and the cynic immorality of the former, and the rabid and blaspheming God-hate of the latter, I could not but acknowledge both as masters of the English tongue. Byron excels in strength and stateliness and elasticity, and Shelley in a magic subtlety and delicacy of phrase. Shelley's prose, too, is of a very high order. The only theology I read during these summer months consisted of Massillon's Sermons and the ninth volume of Wesley's Works.

It will naturally be asked, as with my Grove reading, How could you crowd all this reading into so short a time? The answer is, with the exception of a short siesta, followed by a hasty "four o'clock" (the Belper name for tea-time), or a more leisurely, luxurious tea-taking at the Goodwins', or a too rare saunter with Mr Goodwin by the Derwent side, or to take the service for him at Hazlewood, I spent my entire mornings and evenings in enthusiastic outdoor reading, and being still distressingly afflicted with *insomnia*, I also read long after the family were fast asleep.

During these months at Belper I heard some very notable men. Amongst these was Dr Pye-Smith. He had won well-deserved repute as a scholar and a theologian by his works on *The Sacrifice and Priesthood of Jesus Christ*, and *The Scripture Testimony to the Messiah*, and was, perhaps, the earliest orthodox and evangelical English divine to affirm the antiquity of the globe, and to question the universality of the Deluge. I heard him twice. His physique was slight, but shapely. His countenance was prepossessing in a high degree, betokening refinement, culture, and a calm but resolute intelligence. His brow was exquisitely moulded, and his features delicate and white and statuesque as chiselled marble, and as immobile, except the muscles of the lips.

What a contrast to the Homerton professor was the next celebrity whom I heard preach in Belper! This was no other than *James Everett*. He was then in all the sternness of his strength. He was a stalwart, muscular Northumbrian, and, like William Griffith, built for popular effectiveness. There was a patriarchal gravity, simplicity, and homeliness about him which

arrested and impressed and excited expectation. His individuality was strongly marked.

I also heard from the same pulpit Mr Everett's future associate, William Griffith, having previously taken tea with him in company with Miss Bourne, the lady who, a year later, became his wife. In making choice of her he showed consummate taste and judgement. In piety, in gentleness, in strength, in all the graces and the gifts of womanhood, she was as near perfection as one would wish to see. Having spent good part of ten vacations, and of my last long holiday, at the hospitable homestead at Denby Pottery, till I had become almost an inmate of the place, I had ample opportunity of forming a just estimate of her attractive, yet well-wearing qualities. Mr Griffith was an impetuous, effervescent, epigrammatic talker. He preached with animation, energy, and good old Methodist simplicity and zeal, from "Now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation." He was more immediately telling than was Mr Everett, and called forth some resonant responses.

I had also again the privilege of meeting Dr Dixon, and hearing another of his massive sermons, having been invited to preach in conjunction with him at Castle Donnington, his native neighbourhood. Two days later he was elected President of the Conference by a large majority. He gave us a tentative rehearsal of his intended presidential sermon. It was well he did, for he had not mastered it, and so it nearly mastered him. For a full hour he floundered, like an embogged elephant, his enormous intellectual mass only making more pitiable his struggles for self-extrication. At last he said, "And now I have given you just about half my sermon; but I'll spare you the rest, except the application." He then blazed forth with all the awe-inspiring beauty of a magnificent *aurora borealis*. At the close he seemed exhausted and depressed, and called upon the Rev. Samuel Fiddian to pray. Such a prayer I had never heard before, and very seldom since. It was taking heaven by storm. This was my first sight of that devoted minister.

Anxious to recover from my sleeplessness before again beginning Circuit work, I took a walking tour amongst the most delightful scenery, and this, through God's great mercy, accomplished that which every other remedy had failed to do. Happily, I had resolutely eschewed all soporifics. My first

stage was determined by the book which I was just then reading, Boswell's *Life of Samuel Johnson*. I had reached the point where he visits Kedleston Hall, the seat of the Earl of Scarsdale, and describes Rembrandt's wonderful picture, *Daniel interpreting Nebuchadnezzar's Dream*. I resolved to see that picture and the rest of the collection, Kedleston being but six miles from Belper by the charming cut across the fields. Happily, I can here fall back upon my journal, which I had recommenced. The first entries of the new series are : "*August 13, 1841*.—Have been so long an inmate of the house of affliction that it has become to me a home : a place of content, repose, endearment, happiness."

I spent at Kedleston two nights and the intervening day. I gave up half the day to a study of the paintings in Kedleston Hall, and the other half to penning my impressions whilst still fresh and vivid. I quote from my journal : "Twenty magnificent columns support the entrance-hall. They are of Derbyshire marble dug from his Lordship's own estate. The statuary is very striking. The figures are exquisite in proportions and elegant in attitude, displaying the all but creative might of genius, and the strength and beauty of the human frame. The hall at Kedleston was a Pantheon, a 'chamber of imagery'—Apollo, Venus, Bacchus," etc.

"The painting which I specially went to see was far from disappointing. The perfectly natural attitude and expression of the youthful Daniel, his simple beauty, the deep and solemn interest shown by Nebuchadnezzar, the criticism, the chagrin and hatred betrayed by another face, the accurate, important look of the recording scribe, the varied aspects of attention in the other figures, and the mysterious, antique air of the entire piece were most impressive. Another memorable masterpiece was *Alexander and Darius*, by Paul Veronese. *Louis le Grand reviewing his fleet from Dunkirk* is magnificent. I felt almost as exhilarated by it as I had been by a fresh sea-breeze. *Diogenes with his lanthorn*, by Giordano, is very fine. An exquisite *Holy Family*, by Raphael, is wonderful ; *Jesus and the little Baptist embracing*, like Righteousness and Peace kissing each other—the Virgin holding back the sturdy little Baptist, as if she thought him wanting in reverence for the Holy Child. Raphael's *Death of the Virgin* is a little gem. *Moses drawing water out of the Rock*, by Teniers, is also fine : the scenery and the sky, the eager thirst of the multitude, and the indignant haughtiness of Moses. Benedetto Lutti's *Cain and Abel* is an admirable picture with strong lights. The figure of Cain is terrible from the horror which darkens

and distorts his countenance. In such paintings as these Art becomes exposition of a most effective kind. In *Matlock Heights* and *A Scene near Matlock*, by Tuscarelli, the scenery of Derbyshire is thoroughly Italianized, with very striking effect."

Having injudiciously lingered amidst the attractions of Kedleston till after my "four o'clock," I reached my next stage, Ashbourne twelve or fourteen miles off, rather late. I made my way to Dr Johnson's favourite inn.

The next morning, on coming down to breakfast at eight o'clock, I met with a shocking instance of the state of professional morals half a century ago. The "Boots" came in and said with a broad grin and in broadest Derbyshire: "Here's Pawson W——; hei *is* some drunk!" At that time, in South Derbyshire, the parish-sot was almost sure to be a clergyman, a doctor, or a lawyer.

"I visited the fine old parish church. The contrast between the stiff attitude and the hard, expressionless features on the ancient altar-tomb of the Bradburne family and the exquisite sculpture of the daughter of Sir Brooke Boothby is most remarkable. The former is exactly described by Miss Taylor:—

'Outstretched together are expressed
 He and his lady fair,
 With hands uplifted on the breast,
 In attitude of prayer;
 Long visaged, clad in armour he,
 With ruffled arm and bodice she.
 Set forth, in order as they died,
 Their numerous offspring bend,
 Devoutly kneeling side by side,
 As if they did intend
 For past offences to atone
 By saying endless prayers in stone.'

"Afterwards I waited on Mr Webster, who occupied the house where Dr Taylor resided, whom Dr Johnson often visited. I was shown through the rooms, and allowed to inspect Sir Joshua Reynolds' famous portraits of Dr Johnson and Dr Taylor. The effigies of the Moralist and the Divine are strikingly characteristic. The one exhibits profound, discriminating thought, and gruff and snappish dogmatism; the other is the goodly *beau idéal* of an easy, dignified, and harmless clergyman. I bought a copy of the 'Sermons left for publication by Dr Taylor.' They are either the compositions of Johnson himself or most successful imitations of his style."¹

[¹ It is now proved almost conclusively that the sermons are actually Johnson's.—
 J. R. G.]

I next made for Colwich Abbey, part of the spoils of the Abbey lands. The family who obtained the manor were signally unfortunate for successive generations ; a fact which drew from Erdswick, an old chronicler, the following striking simile : " No wonder that the eagle's nest is struck by lightning, which stole food for its young from the altar of the Lord." Gisborne, in his *Vale of the Weaver*, gives a highly poetic description of Colwich Abbey. This was a favourite retreat of Handel's.

"Thence to Wootton Hall, the residence of Rousseau during his year's seclusion in England. Rousseau writes: 'I have arrived at last in an agreeable and sequestered asylum, where I hope to breathe freely and at peace.' Here he nursed his speculations and his fancies, and indulged his passion for botanical research, the woods and wilds in the neighbourhood abounding in rare specimens. The situation is romantic, a spot which he might 'people with affections'; for

"Tis lone

And wonderful and deep, and hath a sound
And sight and sense of sweetness.'

"Thence to Wootton Lodge, a fine old castellated mansion, which stood a siege during the civil war. Thence to Alton Towers, to my fancy far more charming than even Chatsworth, so much wilder and more picturesque. I spent an hour in listening to an old Welsh harper. I love the Welsh music; it is so simple, rousing, and pathetic. The chapel just completed by Pugin is superb.

"From Alton Towers to Snelstone, the birthplace of Archbishop Sheldon and of Michael Thomas Sadler. My next place of pilgrimage was Ilam Hall, which combines beautifully the stateliness, the ease and comfort of an English family mansion with the martial strength of the castellated Gothic.

"One of its chief attractions is an exquisite statue by the great Derbyshire sculptor, Chantrey, in memory of D. P. Watts. Mr Watts rests in a half-recumbent posture on a couch. He holds a bible in one hand, and is giving his dying blessing to his daughter, who kneels by his side. Three little ones stand by her side, the two eldest regarding the dying man with reverent and mournful affection; the youngest is clasping his mother's knee, and hiding his face in her dress. Walked into the gardens, exquisitely situated in the very hollow of the glen. Johnson and Boswell visited them, and the former said that the part which is enclosed by mountains realised, more nearly than any other scene he had ever gazed upon, his own idea of the Happy Valley in *Rasselas*. Erasmus Darwin describes many of the scenes, traditions and associations of this enchanting neighbourhood in his own fanciful and pompous style.

"Spent the rest of the day till night-fall in Dove Dale. I never saw anything so romantic. But I nearly paid for my rapture with my life. Being advised to take my first view of the Dale from the heights above it, I climbed to one of the highest points before entering it. The slope into the Dale seemed quite practicable, so I committed myself to it, but soon came upon a stretch of loose shale, which slid from under my feet. I must soon have been precipitated headlong, but saw that my only chance was to sit and slide down the shivering slope, steadying myself as much as possible with my hands, by gently grasping the tufts of coarse herbage which grew amongst the shale. This proved a very delicate process, as had I grasped so hard as to uproot or break a tuft the impetus would have been altogether uncontrollable. Had I for a moment lost my nerve I must have been dashed to pieces. I had no time to pray, except by

‘The upward glancing of an eye
When none but God is near.’

At last I reached the level with a bounce and a bang which I thought must have at least broken my legs. But, ‘through mercy,’ I suffered nothing worse than a severe shaking. I found afterwards that a young lady had lost her life near the same spot by a similar miscalculation.

"After tea I got immersed in the literary parts of Walton's *Angler* and in his *Life* by Sir John Hawkins, and much enjoyed what Sir John calls ‘the sober pleasantries and unlicentious hilarity’ of *Piscator*. But with the exception of some exquisite little passages, his style seemed only interesting as the simple tales and the oracular sentiments of a talkative, good-humoured grandfather. The tone and phrase remind one of *Little Red Riding Hood*.

"Spent the next morning also in exploring Dove Dale, and then made for Beresford Hall, the seat of Charles Cotton, through the antique and almost ideally English village of Alstonfield. Saw the little fishing-hut and the intertwined names of Cotton and Walton.

"Finished my delightful pilgrimage by walking the fourteen miles from Ashbourne to Belper. Passed Ashbourne Hall, the seat of famous families, where Prince Charles Stuart fixed his head-quarters in 1745. My only companion in this pleasant trip was Boswell's *Life of Johnson*. Reached home much improved by my long ramble."

The next entry in my journal seems to mark a turning point in my mental history :—

"My mind is more ardent than cautious. I do not hold a specious notion or a brilliant thought at arm's length until I have ascertained whence it comes and whither it is tending. My mental economy is far too hospitable : keeping open house and welcoming every interesting idea, without enough considering whether it consists with deeper and more certain

principles. My style, I trust, will right itself. I have often erred from the fancy that my congregations would not relish the home-baked bread of life, but must be fed on bride-cake or other confectionery, encased in thicknesses of sugar, and tricked out with divers quaint devices and surmounted by painted sweeties. But I trust that dispensation 'is ready to vanish away.' 'When I was a child I thought as a child, I *spake* as a child,' but in three months' time I shall have become a man (twenty-one years old), and must 'put away childish things.' *Fuit!* I want to be 'without art graceful, without effort strong.'

"I finished the first year of my ministry most pleasantly by preaching an occasional sermon at Shottle in the Belper Circuit on Sunday evening, August 22, 1841."

CHAPTER IX

A TYPICAL COUNTRY CIRCUIT

UNDER date, August 25, 1841, I find in my journal the following entry :—

“*Saturday, August 28.*—Walked to Ilkeston, my new Circuit; much enjoyed the walk.”

Just forty years before, in 1801, my father walked from his father's cottage, some six miles from Belper, to *his* second Circuit. But there was this great difference: I walked only eight miles by the pleasant field-path, and he walked from little Eaton to Bedford, more than eighty miles.

The Ilkeston Circuit was not altogether unknown to me, nor I to it. I had preached at Ilkeston, and had also preached the Sunday school sermons at the two most popular gatherings in the Circuit: Cotmanhay and Stanley Common. Moreover—no unimportant consideration—I had spent some of my most taking, if not my most telling, sermons. The Ilkeston Circuit was seventeen miles in length, from Long Eaton, on the river Trent, up the course of the river Erewash, its tributary, to New Brinsley, northward; its width from Stanley Common to Kimberley being eight miles. Throughout this tract of country Methodism was a powerful and beneficent factor in a community well-employed, comfortably circumstanced, and as compared with some of the neighbouring towns, Belper for example, remarkably temperate and well-conducted. Methodism had been built up, on the slopes of this then secluded valley, by a succession of laborious Itinerants and local preachers. Constituted a Circuit in 1809, it had been “worked” by energetic, indefatigable men, some of them of an individuality strongly stamped and unforgettable, such as Philip Hardcastle, sen., John C. Leppington, John Aslin, Thomas Padman, and my father's young man in his last Circuit, the fervid, fluent and withal studious Welshman, John Griffith. All these were talked about with never-tiring interest;

though one strong-willed superintendent was connoted by the designation "Butty"—the term applied to the proverbially overbearing captain of a coal-pit.

Our pleasantly situated, old-fashioned chapel in the town was duly attended by the seat-holding families on Sunday morning and evening, and was well filled up at the latter service by the general public. Throughout the Circuit there was not one member of the Society with any pretensions to wealth, and but two seat-holders of independent means—Mr Jermyn, a retired physician of Sandiacre, and Mr Howitt, of Long Eaton, cousin of the famous William Howitt. But the most prosperous shopkeeper in the town was a Methodist, and always ready to entertain ministers who came to preach occasional sermons, and was not ungenerous in his contributions. Our congregation was composite. We had five or six substantial farmers, some of whom walked miles each way to the Sunday services. We had a fair sprinkling of much-respected and comfortable shopkeepers, and the rest were thriving artisans, colliers, and those who lived by miscellaneous industries.

My superintendent, Thomas Skelton, was a tall, well-built, well-shaped North Yorkshireman, the most clerical-looking and most dignified personage in the valley of the Erewash, not excepting Mr Plumtre of Eastwood and Mr Meek of Ilkeston, both of whom were very tall and stately, and, as a wag said, might have served for the steeple as well as for the church. But neither of them was so "comely in going" nor so careful of his attire as was the fine old Methodist superintendent. The Minutes for 1846 truthfully record: "The power of Divine grace was pleasingly manifested in the subjugation of a disposition naturally irritable." We saw very little of each other except at country missionary meetings; for, as a rule, when he was in the town I was in the country, and *vice versâ*. He was a widower with three most amiable daughters, not one of whom was in the least afflicted with his constitutional irritability. One winter's evening, after a long spell of eager and exhausting study, I felt an ominous collapse of nervous energy, and found "the black dog" again upon my shoulders. What was to be done? To send for the doctor was not to be thought of, as one of the superintendent's unvarying petitions at family prayer was, "Keep disease and the doctor out of this house." So, in a fit of desperation, I resolved to fall back upon a

remedy which seemed to be *justified by stern necessity*. "In the days of my vanity" I had often amused my school-fellows by feats of humorous personation—of course, of a highly moral tendency ; and during my nervous breakdown I had entertained my sisters and some other relatives by exhibiting that unsuspected faculty. So I descended to the sitting-room where the three young ladies were hard at work for our approaching bazaar, and astonished them by singing a sailor's street-ditty. I had got as far as the line, "Three thieving rogues together," when in walked the venerable Super, who, according to his own planning, should have been at the extremity of the Circuit. The service had been given up in favour of an anniversary celebration at another Nonconformist chapel, so he had come home before his time. I felt at once that, in this case, valour was the better part of discretion ; so I went on with the performance, fearing all the time that he would look minor district meetings at me. But I finished the ditty with its obvious moral : the besetments belonging to different classes, and the unfailing law of retribution. It is a curious physiological fact that I could do as imitation what I was utterly incapable of in my proper person. So I roared out :—

"And the miller, he stole *corn*,
 And the tailor, he stole *yarn*,
 And the sailor, he stole guid broadcloth,
 To keep those three rogues wa-a-arm.
 To keep those three rogues warm.

"And the miller was drowned in his *dam*,
 And the tailor was hung in his *yarn*,
 And a spirit flew away with the wicked sailor-boy,
 With the broadcloth under his a-a-arm,
 With the broadcloth under his arm."

This finished, I walked up to the Super, and piteously besought his "reverence" for a trifle to help pay for a bit of bread and cheese and a night's lodging. The tender-hearted man forthwith put some silver into my hand, accompanied by the best advice to find some more honourable and dependable way of getting a living. I sincerely promised to do my very best, and might have walked out and returned without giving my bishop the slightest suspicion of my personal identity, but the convulsive laughter of the ladies spoilt it all. So I reverted to my old type, exclaiming : "Oh ! Mr Skelton, whoever

thought of seeing you? Why, you're at New Brinsley according to the Plan!" "The subjugation of a disposition naturally irritable" was at once "most pleasingly manifested." He looked me in the face with alarm and gravity, and simply said: "Sir, you have a very dangerous talent—*very dangerous.*" And I heard no more about it.

The house was on the whole the choicest in the town, being embosomed in a large garden. The Circuit steward had secured it at almost a peppercorn rent; the owner, being obliged to leave the neighbourhood, yet hoping to return, had preferred a trustworthy tenant to a high rental; so the house was far superior to most preachers' houses of the time. Ilkeston itself being perched upon the summit of a lofty hill, and my study (*eyrie*, I used to call it) being at the top of the house, it commanded a lovely sweep of English landscape, including ten most picturesque village churches.

Next to the superintendent, the town Circuit steward has the first claim to notice. And a very notable personality he was. Daniel Hudson was a lace-weaver, occupying a very humble cottage in a side street, but every one felt him to be the best man for the senior Circuit-stewardship. He must have been a skilled artisan, for he and his family always dressed well, and he was one of our best givers. He worked many hours a day at his loom in his own cottage, but was always ready in the evenings either for an hour's chat at the preacher's house, or for a walk with "the young man" to a country appointment, or for a literary yarn at any time of day. He was, next to Dr Lucas, the literary oracle of the busy little town. He was a devotee of Modern English literature. At that time, the Mechanics' Institutes had given an immense impetus to the intellectual life of the working men and the struggling shop-keepers of South Derbyshire; and Lord Brougham's *Pursuit of Knowledge under Difficulties* had fired many a noble nature with a passion for self-culture. Foremost among these was Dani'l Hudson of Il's-on. I always knew where to go if I wanted a literary chat. At whatever part of the day I might call, he was entirely at my service. He had acquired the art of working and reading at the same time, so I always found him at his loom with a book before him. Through his influence the best new books were secured for the library of the Mechanics' Institute, and Daniel always had the *handsel* of them.

Happily for me, I had become acquainted with our literary Circuit steward more than two years before my appointment to the Circuit. Whilst still a local preacher, when preaching the Sunday school sermons at Cotmanhay, I observed in the front row of the gallery a very striking figure: square-built, thick-set, big-browed, with a brilliant complexion and a large imperatorial nose, with an air of importance, and with a critical, judicial aspect. I soon saw that I was not making a favourable impression on this authoritative individual. The next day the superintendent of the Circuit told me laughingly: "Your last night's service did not please our great man here. Your putting your introduction before your text seemed to him a self-conceited innovation, intolerable in a man so young." To this I replied: "Shrewd fellow that! That man's worth knowing. You must introduce me to him." I secured an interview with my censor, and found that we had many points of sympathy, especially our passionate admiration for imaginative writers both in prose and verse. We parted "very friends."

To Daniel Hudson I owe a life-long debt of gratitude, inasmuch as I have no doubt he saved my life. I took the utmost possible pains with my preparation for the pulpit, and had very few sermons to start with. This involved a severe strain on my enfeebled and not yet fully recuperated powers. This my friend had the sagacity to see; so one Monday evening, after I had been about two months in the Circuit, he came to me and gravely spoke on this wise: "I come as Circuit steward this time. We can't afford to have you break down; and it is quite certain that you cannot long keep up a style of preaching which must make a very heavy draw upon you, considering all the rest you have to do, and we can't let you off from. Of course, the more thought and the more poetry you put into your sermons the better we all like it. But we are not *nice hungry*; we can feed on plain food. But there is one thing we cannot do without, and that is personal *looking up*, by household visitation. No man has left such a mark on this Circuit or added so many to the Societies as the poorest preacher we ever had in it. There was hardly a local preacher on the Plan who did not know that he could preach far better than that minister, and yet if you inquire, you will find more of his converts than of any other man, and all by dint of house to house visitation. If you like, and can do it without trouble, you may write the

introductions and the heads of your sermons, just to start you fairly ; but that must be all. Spend your time either in the fields meditating, or in your people's houses talking and praying." I thanked him heartily and took the hint. I have no doubt that but for his advice I should have had another and, probably, a fatal break down.

Our country Circuit steward, Mr Smith, of Langley Mill, was just as fine a man in his own way. He was young, and only just married. He was well educated, a natural gentleman, and highly intelligent, though not a great reader. He soon acquired a high Connexional reputation by his noble characteristics as a manly, modest, gentle spirit, his generous giving, and his rare business tact and shrewdness. Accustomed both to obey and to command, he was moulded by the great Architect to be a pillar in His Church. His tall, graceful figure, and his grave, reflective face, became familiar to successive Conferences, as a member of Committees of Review, and then as Lay Representative for the Nottingham and Derby District.

We had in the Circuit in 1841 two persons of Connexional celebrity, Mrs Taft, admittedly the greatest female preacher and revivalist of her time, and Tilson, the composer of the most popular anthem on "I will arise." Poor Tilson died very shortly after my arrival in the Circuit of a most painful throat-disease, brought on by excessive use of his voice both as a preacher and a choirmaster.

Mrs Taft, originally Mary Barritt, as an Itinerant had been the means of the conversion of thousands, amongst the rest of a young village joiner, who became "the venerable Thomas Jackson." Mrs Taft's autobiography was one of the first books I ever read, when four years of age, and it had been a cherished aspiration ever since to see this wondrous woman. My father, who entertained a strong objection to female preaching, on grounds much less Biblical than æsthetic, always excepted Mrs Taft, whom he pronounced to be as much abler in the pulpit as she was more successful in the prayer-meeting than the great majority of Methodist preachers. He declared that for her to refrain from preaching would have been a deadly sin, and that the *best* sermon he had ever heard was from Mary Barritt, her text being the hymn, "My God, the spring of all my joys," etc. In my father's younger days of impassioned, vehement revivalism, he had been much associated with the female Boanerges-Barnabas.

In the Retford Circuit his superintendent had been John Barritt, her brother, and their colleague, Robert Melson, her brother-in-law, and she had "laboured much in the Lord," in conjunction with the three preachers. Her admiration of my father's preaching was quite equal to his of hers.

Mr Taft was a still older friend of my father's. As local preachers they had been intimate for years, their homes being but about five miles apart, and my father often preached at Sandiacre.

So when I first went to preach at Sandiacre, and to be the guest of the Rev. Zechariah and Mary Taft (in the public estimation the "Rev." included both), I felt the way of duty to be a path of pleasantness. But, before I started, Brother Hudson said to me: "*Mah lad!*" (a term of confidential kindness at that time in Derbyshire), "you'd better comb that heathen hair of yours straight down over your forehead, or else good Mother Taft will do it for you before she lets you preach in Sandiacre chapel."

So far from being received with critical scrutiny, I was welcomed with enthusiasm. Had I been their nephew they could not have been more affectionately tender. Before I went to chapel the kind old lady made me take a teaspoonful of Friar's balsam, soaked into a lump of sugar, lifting up her hands and eyes in prayer, and exclaiming, "God bless it to you!" This dose she repeated every time I preached at Sandiacre in the evening. Whether as the result of this medicament or not, it was noted that I preached with much more bodily vigour at Sandiacre than elsewhere; to use the expressive phrase of the natives, I was physically "*more at the top of my work.*"

Mrs Taft's intellectual development was wonderful, considering her deplorable destitution of even the rough rustic schooling of the last century. This she told me most pathetically. As she carefully raised the Friar's balsam to my lips, I could not but note the swollen and contorted state of all her fingers. "Ah!" she said, "that's the work of almost a lifetime of rheumatism. From childhood till I *went out* to preach the Gospel, I wrought in the Lancashire fields as a '*daytal labourer*,' and even as a preacher I suffered much from exposure and hard living."

In writing that, throughout the Ilkeston Circuit, we had "but two seat-holders of *independent* means," I used the word

less strictly than conventionally. The most truly "independent" man I ever knew was a member of my flock at Ilkeston, and my nearest neighbour southward. He was an old pensioner, who had fought all through the Peninsular (as he pronounced it, *Peninsular*) War, unscathed and unconverted. But after Wellington had driven Soult before him out of Spain, and had in turn invaded France, after the termination of hostilities had been officially announced to the English army, but not yet to the French, occurred the disastrous night-battle of Bayonne, which Alison records as "a deplorable event which threw a gloom over the glorious termination of the Peninsular War." In this "terrible conflict" my future friend and neighbour had been fearfully and, as he then thought, fatally wounded. But through the tender mercy of God, the wound proved not unto bodily death, but unto spiritual life. His realistic description of the event, as I heard him give it at the Ilkeston Lovefeast, was the most graphic and most thrilling "experience" I ever heard in any Lovefeast: all the more from his telling in the rough and not very reverent soldier-slang of the time his soliloquy as he lay stretched on the ground, bleeding, as he thought, to death, and looking up into the sky, ever and anon aflame with the death-fires of the struggle. Amidst that roar of artillery, and flux and reflux of the tide of deadly struggle in the dark, he for the first time "came to himself." His chances of escape seemed very small. Even if he did not bleed to death, it seemed certain that he would be trampled to pieces in the successive charges and counter-charges of a hand-to-hand encounter. But the battle-field was to him what the lonely heath at Bethel had been to Jacob—his meeting-place with God. He vowed that if God would spare him, he would henceforth serve the Lord. He was taken prisoner by the French, and instead of the *coup de grâce* from a French bayonet which he expected, was conveyed to hospital, where he lay for a long time, hovering between life and death. But he kept his vow. His simple, manly way of telling his experience greatly added to its effect. I have noted with surprise that an aged soldier-saint always tells the tale of his religious life with sedateness, calmness, and a kind of tender awe.

It was his spiritual resources which made our soldier-friend so instructive to his youthful pastor. He lived sans wife, sans child, sans servant, sans any one at all. He managed to live

upon his pension and the produce of his little garden. His only recreation was "the means of grace." Every time I took my book into the fields for a luxurious read, I passed his cottage and interrupted his Adamic occupation by a little Christian chat. I said to him once: "Don't you feel lonely sometimes?" To which he answered: "Well, now and then I do feel rayther *solemntary*; but then, you know, sir, I have always my Heavenly Father to look up to, and my blessed Saviour lives along with me, and the Holy Spirit is my Comforter." Often in fits of dejection, when for a time "all uncompanied," I have recalled, with self-reproach, the erect, tall figure of my soldier-friend: "a good man satisfied from himself."

"Rayther *solemntary*." This is an apt instance of an interesting and most serviceable usage which I have found nowhere else but in the valley of the Erewash: that of welding two words into one, so as to make a new and more expressive term.¹ "*Solemntary*" is, of course, a fusion of the word "solemn" with the word "solitary," resulting in a still more sombre epithet. I met with an amusing combination of two distinct words at Long Eaton. Some one came in and said: "There's that — prowling about the premises; he means no good, I'm sure." "Oh!" replied another, "I'll go and *recognonize* him." This was a confused concatenation of *recognise* with *reconnoitre*, blending the signification of the two. Besides this amusing faculty, the natives of the Erewash Valley were the smartest blunderers in the use of "Dictionary words" I ever met with. Our most prosperous member proposed at a Trustee Meeting that we should deal with the chapel debt by inviting "some *opulent* preacher." Obviously he meant *popular*. Jabez Hanbury of Sandiacre, "the happy barber," after describing his conversion under the ministry of Bramwell, exclaimed: "The dear old *matron*! I hope to see him soon." *Veteran* he meant, of course.

Erewash, say the local archæologists, means *river of heroes*, and my *Peninsular* gossip was far from being the only native of the valley who had helped to make history. Our ablest local preacher, by the acclamation of his brethren, Brother S—— of Sandiacre, had first displayed his gift of eloquence as one of the famous mutineers at the Nore. He had escaped

[¹ My father never became acquainted with *Alice's* "portmanteaus."]

hanging only from compassion for his youth, and the fact that vengeance was satiated with the number of its older victims. But he had to witness the hanging of Parker and a number of his accomplices, and had to aid in the execution of some of his companions by hauling at the rope which strung them up at the yardarm. His details of that tragic episode were vivid and exciting, but the narration evidently pained him deeply.

On my first Sunday, August 29, I preached at Ilkeston morning and evening, and at Cotmanhay in the afternoon, and held a prayer-meeting after the evening service. We invariably preached three times on the Sunday, at two or three different places, so legs as well as lungs were brought into requisition. On this day I had experience of both the encouragement and the discouragement of a Gospel Minister; but the encouragement preponderated greatly. A young man was drawn to chapel in the evening by the fact that we both bore the same name. He was thoroughly convinced of sin, and was filled with joy and peace through believing. The attachment of this young convert to the instrument of his conversion was most affecting and most serviceable. He placed himself at my disposal on my night walks to and from my country work. This was a great comfort, as not only every farmstead, but almost every cottager kept a savage dog, which deemed it its duty to assault all strangers passing in the dark or dusk. My *fidus Achates* always brought a stout stick, not to ward off human enemies, though they were not unknown. A local preacher who never sallied forth to a night appointment without an apostolic staff, being asked why he carried with him such a weighty weapon, replied: "Because nobody shouldn't mislest me."

At that time the emotional element must have been a strong factor in my preaching, for to my young convert a sermon was emotional or nothing. His highest tribute to a homily was: "It were t' feilin'st (*feelingest, most touching*) sarmon I ivver heeard."

Happily, my discouragement was but ephemeral. My evening text was: "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." In the most "promiscuous" and passing manner, I reminded my hearers that the true freedom is spiritual freedom: freedom from guilt and fear and the

slavery of sin, and that perfect outward liberty was no compensation for the want of that which the truth alone can give. There must have been something objectionable in my tone or terms, or both. Our most prosperous member was in high dudgeon; but I lost no time in putting matters right, going straight from the prayer-meeting to his house, and assuring him that I had not the slightest reference to party politics. He was at length appeased. Thus early was I taught a lesson which, I think, I have faithfully observed throughout my ministry: to take the utmost care never to indicate in the slightest degree my own political leanings, either in *preaching* or in *public prayer*, or to impinge upon the political susceptibilities of my hearers.

Cotmanhay, where we always preached in the afternoon of our town Sunday, was a swarming hive of industry, most distinguished by the musical proclivities of its inhabitants, and by a system of intermarriage, only rivalled by the Royal families of Europe, which stamped upon the people a sort of tribal type. The fewness of the surnames was most remarkable. We had a crowded congregation on the Sunday afternoons, with the most vociferous singing and the most impassioned playing it ever was my lot to hear. The Cotmanhay vocalists were so unique that twenty-five years afterwards, on preaching at another place, I said on descending from the pulpit: "Those singers come from Cotmanhay; that quality of voice and style of shouting could not be produced in any other place." To which the answer was: "Every one of them! That's the Cotmanhay choir, who have volunteered for the occasion."

One of our most marked *characters* was William Wadkinson, of Cotmanhay, a local preacher. He was a classic in the vernacular. He made the people "hear in their own tongue wherein they were born the wonderful works of God." He began a sermon on the conversion of Saul of Tarsus thus: "Ah'l nivver belev'e as t' divel's gotten foor-knowledge; for if he'd 'ed, he'd nivver 'a' sent Paul o' that journey to Damascus."

I find from my journal that on my first Monday in the Circuit I preached at Kimberley, Brother Hudson kindly escorting me, to show me the field-path through "the *Knockedock*" (under the *aqueduct*), which would save a mile. The subjects of our conversations may be gathered from my

record of the one by which we beguiled the walk to Kimberley and back. He had just finished reading the seven volumes of Lockhart's *Life of Sir Walter Scott*, then a new book, and overflowed with admiration for Scott.

"We discussed chiefly Scott's religious views and sympathies. Notwithstanding Scott's high appreciation of Methodism as a socially upheaving and reforming force, and notwithstanding his reverent and virtuous orthodoxy, and his respect for the ordinances of the Church, he had a very dim perception of 'the beauty of holiness.' His nearest approach to this is in his delineation of Colonel Gardiner in *Waverley*, of Dr Erskine's preaching in *Guy Mannering*, and of MacBriar under torture in *Old Mortality*. I could not but regret that amidst all his examples of dark and merciless fanaticism, of sanctimonious treachery, of canting selfishness, and of spiritual hallucination, amidst his Balfours, his Mucklewraths, his Christians, and his Bridgenorths, he should let slip such a fine historic character as that of Archbishop Leighton, who combined the virtues and escaped the vices alike of Puritan, of Covenanter, and of Anglican. This is the more noteworthy as Leighton was, like Scott himself, Episcopalian."

Kimberley, the unpretending village, has since given title to an earldom, to a vast grain-yielding and gold-bearing district in Australia, and to the proud and populous young capital of the Diamond Fields of Southern Africa. In the original Kimberley material gems were all "black diamonds," and its precious metals were mainly in the tills of little shopkeepers or the thrifty colliers' Savings Bank. Yet it had in its spiritual strata, half a century ago, many a lump of richly gleaming quartz, and mental diamond-diggings that well repaid the sturdiest toil. The purest gem of all was Brother Hirst, whose comfortable dwelling was usually my home at Kimberley. He was our only author. Years earlier I had read with great interest the volume of his poems, which was very popular in his own neighbourhood. He had also published a capital *History of Music*. He had been a great singer and a much-appreciated preacher; but his voice had been deprived of all modulation, compass, and volume by the brutality of a burglar. Being clerk of a colliery, he had at certain periods a large sum of money in his house. One night he woke up to find three masked ruffians in his room, where his cash-box was kept. When he instinctively cried out, one of them said to another, "Fork him," whereupon that other put his knee to the back of Mr Hirst's neck, drew back his head, and thus deprived him for the time of vocal

power, and incapacitated him almost wholly from public speaking for the rest of his life. A sojourn in the United States had sharpened his wits. I spent one Monday in the month at his house, sleeping there on the Sunday and the Monday night. As a lofty Christian character, as a devoted Methodist, and as a modest man of letters, I found his company most charming. His wife was like-minded, and was one of nature's nobles. Their influence was very fine.

I was greatly encouraged during my first Sunday evening service at Kimberley by a collier in the free seats, who exclaimed after one of my illustrations, "Dear Heart!" an archaic note of admiration even then almost obsolete.

My chief misgiving in entering on the Ilkeston Circuit had regard to literary companionship. But oh how pleasantly I was undeceived! Besides Brother Hirst and Brother Hudson, I found among my flock a veritable man of genius: the elder of the brothers Bush of Long Eaton. He had lived in America for several years, being of an adventurous and enterprising disposition. He was widely acquainted with American Methodism, of which my first authentic information and impressions were received from him. He told me that, at that time, American Methodism had no preacher to equal our own first-class men, but had no preacher so poor as those of our lowest class. He described them as occupying "a very wide range of mediocrity." He had our English and American classics at his tongue's end and at his brain's base. Occasionally I lingered a day at Long Eaton for the advantage of the brothers' converse, and they would walk with me half the way to Ilkeston.

Another splendid literary find was Dr Jermyn of Sandiacre. He was a devoted Churchman, but had been driven from the parish sanctuary by the unclerical habits of the Rector. I myself have met the latter after a Sunday morning service on his way from the church to the public-house, and have seen him enter it, and was assured by his parishioners that this was his regular practice. The result was a large increase of our Sandiacre congregation. One Sunday evening I had the clergyman's own wife and niece as hearers, whilst he had only the parish clerk and the church-schoolmaster. When piqued about it he replied, "Ah! well, I had rather preach to empty pews than empty heads." He was said to be a first-rate scholar, and his contour favoured the report,

In my first Sunday sermon at Sandiacre I had unconsciously won my way to Dr Jermyn's heart by quoting one of Henry Kirke White's finest passages. Dr Jermyn had been Kirke White's school-fellow in Nottingham, his intimate from boyhood till his lamented death, and was a passionate admirer of his character and genius. He owed much to Kirke White's friendship, and was devout, sensitive, imaginative, and studious, and refined even to fastidiousness. He had lived long in France, Italy, and Switzerland, and had become acquainted with Alexander Vinet. The quality of his own mind is betokened by the fact that he regarded Vinet as the greatest preacher and theological thinker of the time. Dr Jermyn conferred on me an inestimable boon by introducing me to Vinet's writings. Vinet's *Essai sur La Manifestation des Convictions Religieuses* had just come out, and with avidity I studied it, as it dealt judicially with a subject which was then much upon my mind : the true relation between Church and State, between civil society and the Kingdom of God. Warburton I had found utterly unsatisfactory ; Heber's *Life of Jeremy Taylor*, and Orme's *Life and Times of Richard Baxter*, the first book I read on reaching Ilkeston, had given to the question a concrete, historical, and pictorial interest. Orme's monograph, though not, like Heber's, a gem of classic English, is nevertheless invaluable from its robust and lucid handling of the various theories of Church Government. But Vinet was my first clear, convincing, satisfying master of the subject. He convinced me, that the distinct and definite functions of the Church and of the State must never be allowed to encroach upon each other ; and that, above all, for a Church to surrender its absolute freedom and autonomy to the civil power, to any power extraneous from itself, and thus to complicate its heavenly mission with worldly interests and contests, on any consideration whatsoever, is disloyalty to its Head and degradation to itself. Dr Jermyn also lent me several separate sermons by Vinet, the surprise and charm of which were inexpressible. The precision, the felicity, and the delicacy of his language, his impassioned reasoning and his argumentative imagination, his palpitating sensibility and his virile honesty and energy, held me spell-bound. This was four years before his *Vital Christianity* was translated into English.

I usually spent an hour or two in conversing with Dr and

Mrs Jermyn on the morrow after having preached at Sandiacre. They both took the kindest interest in my health and in my future. Mrs Jermyn was the sister of Dr Bosworth, the great Anglo-Saxon scholar at Oxford. Dr Jermyn assured me that I should never be able to sustain the wear and tear of the Itinerant Ministry. He told me that he had corresponded with Dr Bosworth, who was trustee of a fund for securing a University education to godly young men who had received the preaching gift, on condition of their taking Holy Orders in the Established Church, and that this fund was available in my own case. I thanked my friends heartily, but informed them that I had already declined the like overture from a Lincolnshire gentleman, who had chosen this as his special form of service to the Church; and that nothing but demonstrated incapacity for the work could induce me to give up the hope of serving God as a Methodist preacher. This prompt off-breaking of the most kindly meant negotiations did not impair our friendship. Dr Jermyn requested me to correspond with him after I left the Circuit, and to this friendship I owed an introduction to Dr Bosworth on my appointment to the Oxford Circuit. I found him one of the homeliest, most simple-minded, and most affable of men.

Another medical man, Dr Lucas of Ilkeston, was a great enrichment of my literary circle. He was a young Scotchman, "an *Ang-us* lad," as he described himself, and vastly popular by reason of his gentleness, his lowliness, his quiet humour, his simple piety, his communicative culture, and his courtesy and deftness in colloquial controversy. My journal notes his "rare metaphysical acumen, his refined literary tastes, and a heart which does homage to excellence wherever it appears, and rejoices over a fine thought or a happy expression as one that findeth great spoil." His broad Scotch pronunciation, which he rather cultivated than checked, gave his delightful conversation an added charm.

I was also on familiar terms with another very able medical practitioner, a Frenchman, Dr Bosquet of Stapleford. My friends there called him to my assistance one evening when, whilst meeting a class after preaching, I was taken with an alarming attack of vertigo. He showed keen interest in my case, and made me a present of a highly ingenious and original work of his own, on *The Philosophy of Indigestion*. He was most interesting and companionable, but eccentric to an ex-

treme. He was somewhat of a theorist, and talked as much about "the *ganglionic* system" as Dr Jermyn did about "the *sanguiferous* system." He called my complaint *Mimosis*, "because of its imitating the symptoms of almost all diseases." He was in some respects a pessimist. He told me that so far as his own professional experience extended, the wide diffusion of intellectual excitement was acting injuriously on the physical condition of the people.

Another great literary gain to me was Mr Gamble, a bright-minded, sweet-natured young Methodist tradesman in Ilkeston, who took the *Spectator* and the *Examiner*, and occasionally the *Athenæum*, and regularly sent them on to me. So I was well off both for good reading and good talking.

Soon after my arrival in the Circuit Mr Hudson procured for me from the Library of the Mechanics' Institute Moore's *Letters and Journals of Lord Byron*, etc. As an admirer of Byron's genius, and his rich and forceful English, and because of its literary workmanship—prose by a poet—I found this book deeply interesting, whilst as a study in psychology from a spiritual point of view it proved instructive and not unedifying. Like so many poets—Gray, Cowper, etc.—Byron was a consummate letter-writer, and the lyric outbursts in his correspondence are amongst the most musical of compositions. It is a faulty biography in not a few respects; but in it one gets to know the better side of Byron, and to a great extent it allows Byron to be his own biographer and his own portrait-painter. "How abject! how august!"

Our greenest "little hill of Zion" in the Ilkeston Circuit was Sandiacre. Our Sunday services were crowded, lively, and inspiring. Our most demonstrative member was a worthy farmer named Brookhouse, brother of the Rev. Joseph Brookhouse, who spent fifty-five years in a useful ministry, and was my father's colleague, first as a local preacher, and then as a minister, in his first Circuit, Grimsby. At the close of an evening service I used to call on the Rev. Zechariah Taft to conclude with prayer, whereupon he invariably nudged his wife, who was always surcharged with "the spirit of grace and of supplication," and she "forth from" her "breast did pour a mighty cry." If ever a daughter of Zion responded to the call, "Lift up thy voice with strength; lift it up, be not afraid," it was this Dowager-revivalist of Methodism.

An ephemeral sect called *The New Lights* interfered no little with my comfort at our Sunday evening services in Sandiacre. They resorted to a kind of mesmerism for the production of spiritual effects ; and two of their apostles were wont to post themselves directly in front of the pulpit, and go through a series of *passes*, the effect of which on me was not indeed hypnotic, but distracting and annoying. The secticle made no small stir for a time in the neighbourhood of Nottingham. A clergyman in that town, who greatly added to his popularity and effectiveness by his free use of the vernacular in conversation, was asked by an operative, "What do you think, sir, of these wonderful *New Lights*?" With an air of inexpressible satiety, he answered : "Oh, dear ! I'm *fair stalled* with new *lights* ; what I'm longing for is new *livers*."

Our best chapel, on the whole, was at Long Eaton, where we had good congregations, a healthy and united Society, and ten hospitable homes for the preachers : three of which were plenty-teeming farmsteads, two the residences of small but thriving manufacturers, and the rest the cosy dwellings of prospering shopkeepers or of well-left widows. A large proportion of our readers have visited Long Eaton without being conscious of the fact. Trent Junction on the Midland Line stands on the edge of that industrious village.

About a mile from Long Eaton stands Attenborough, an interesting hamlet, which, as its name implies, was once a corporate town. A remnant of the market cross still stands. Attenborough was the birthplace of Cromwell's famous son-in-law, General Ireton, the only one of the Commonwealth worthies who was at once scholar, statesman and soldier. The house in which he was born, and the Latin entry of his baptism, are still shown.

Our fourth place, as regards the size of our chapel, congregations and Society, was Stapleford, which was even then a busy, wide-awake, and prosperous neighbourhood. There lived Mr Ward, the father of the lamented Mayor of Nottingham, who was killed by a fall from his horse whilst engaged in the preparations for the reception of the Prince of Wales for the opening of the exquisite Art Museum, into which was transformed the old castle which had, for so many centuries, looked down upon the charming town and the lovely scenery which is its setting. Not long before his death I had

the privilege of spending two days at his house, and of being conducted by him through the Art Museum, and enjoyed the advantage of his explanations of its admirable arrangements and appointments. He was, I believe, its chief suggester and promoter. At the time when I was so often at his father's house he was a handsome, intellectual, yet withal a retiring youth, in the blossoming spring-tide of his early teens. His parents were accustomed to invite to their house a choice little party of their most thoughtful reading friends. He often told me in later life that his first intellectual impetus was given by the table-talk to which he listened at those kindly gatherings.

By the good offices of the patriarch of our Stapleford Society, Mr Shepherd, a master-carpenter, I became acquainted with my flock at Stapleford more quickly and more closely than with those in any other country place. He accompanied me to the residence of every member of the Society. We had two other first-rate homes in Stapleford, that of Mr Greasely, a highly intelligent farmer, and that of Mr K——, a druggist. The latter, especially, had an acute, sensitive, and eager intellect, and, I think, was the humblest man I ever met with. I often wondered how he had acquired such an intimate acquaintance with our ministers stationed at Nottingham, where he resided before he began business in Stapleford. In his time Nottingham was a wide "walking Circuit," and some of the roads were very lonely, and the entertainment uninviting. He always chose the farthest appointment, walked out to it by himself that he might not disturb the preacher before the service, and was ready to accompany him back to Nottingham. His most frequent place of pilgrimage was the immortal *Gotham*, nine miles from Nottingham. He thus acquired league after league of invaluable and most variegated instruction from such men as Joseph Beaumont, Thomas Harris, Robert Pilter, William Lord, John Watson, William Hurt and Daniel Chapman. The last-named, of course, had made the deepest impression on his mind.

Mr Ward called my attention to a beautiful and striking specimen of early Christian art, standing near the churchyard-gate at Stapleford. It is a pillar most elaborately carved, resting on a solid pedestal. Its tracery would require and repay the most patient study. It is pronounced by the highest archæological authorities to be the work of the very first

evangelists of Britain. Amongst its symbolism is a large representation of the first medical missionary, St Luke. He is represented as a winged figure, with the head of a calf,¹ and trampling on a serpent.

Our next place in numerical importance was Kimberley. If hills and hollows can constitute the picturesque, then Kimberley can claim that epithet. Watnall, where mine host, Mr Hirst, resided, being but five miles from Hucknall, Byron's burial place, I made two pilgrimages to the poet's tomb. At that time the walk from Watnall to Hucknall was as lonely as it was lovely. Although it commanded a rich and populous valley, yet it led near only a few "very *odd* houses," as the local phrase was, meaning very far apart. There were next to no buildings near it but the churches of Linby and Papplewick, Papplewick Hall, afterwards the residence of Mr Walter, of the *Times* newspaper, and a farmstead or two, with here and there some scattered cottages. I was affected by the plainness of Byron's monumental slab, and of the inscription which claims for him no achievement but being the "Author of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*." I noted in the visitors' book the autographs of Thomas Moore, Washington Irving, William M. Bunting, and many great celebrities. On both my visits I called on Mr Ward, a schoolmaster, of whose character, acquirements, and ability I had heard enough to make me much desire an introduction to him. I found him fully equal to his reputation. He was a member of the Methodist New Connexion, and the father of the Rev. Dr Ward, who has been President of their Conference, and Editor and Book Steward.

Hucknall is about the most unromantic resting-place which could have been found for such a great and brilliant poet. It happened that on the day of my first pilgrimage to Byron's tomb I took tea at our second home in Kimberley, the house of a bright and energetic miller, who bore the pathetic name of Widowson. He was the father of a worthy Primitive Methodist minister. When I told him where I had been, and retailed my conversation with the ancient clerk, and Thomas Moore's and William Howitt's descriptions of the funeral, he listened with a meaning twinkle in his eye, and told me that he could add some details of that memorable day which are not to be found in either Moore or Howitt. He was the son

¹ The reference is to the prophetic symbolism of the four living ones.

of the innkeeper at Hucknall, and had seen a great deal of Byron from his boyhood, Hucknall being close by the Newstead estate, and the active and handy son of the village innkeeper being only too pleased and proud to place his services at the disposal of the renowned young nobleman and man of genius. On the day of the funeral, young Widowson had enough to do in attending to the guests, their horses, and their carriages. An immense procession had followed the hearse from Nottingham, where the corpse had lain in state the day before. On the evening of that day, friend Widowson passed through a weird experience. After nightfall the parish clerk called upon young Widowson and proposed that, as they had both been so pre-occupied during the day, as not to have seen Byron's coffin, and as the workmen were ordered to brick up the vault at day-break, they should go down into it together and copy the inscription. Young Widowson agreed, and took with him pen, ink and paper, and two candles, in a lanthorn, one of them lighted. In 1824 there was no handier way of striking a light known to country people than by steel, flint and tinder-box, and the two went without this cumbrous apparatus. On descending into the crypt, they found the coffin still on a tressel, and the place was so cramped that Widowson, in order to copy the inscription, had to lie full length upon the coffin, with his candle on the lid. With a kind of poetic sympathy and justice, the night had closed in wild and gusty, the wind blew "loud wi' angry seugh." The clerk lost nerve, and hearing a swing window clashing backward and forward in the church, said, "I must go and shut that window, or it will smash." So Widowson was left alone, and in raising his hand to take a dip of ink, being so awkwardly situated, and perhaps a little nervous, he knocked down his candle, which was extinguished by the fall. The clerk shouted from the church floor "My light's blown out." "And I've knocked mine out," said Widowson. "I must go and get another," cried the clerk. Now the nearest dwelling to the church was at that date a good half mile off. When the clerk returned it was only with the news, "My light's blown out again." So for more than half an hour the young innkeeper's son lay like a breathing effigy outstretched on Byron's coffin, in the subterranean blackness of the vault, with no other company than generations of the mouldering Byrons, men of grim, uncouth repute, the

last of whom—great-uncle of the poet, who inherited from him the title and estate—had killed his friend and neighbour, Mr Chaworth, for an imaginary slight. The most ghastly apparition that confronted him was the spectral parish clerk, who, on his re-appearance, seemed as if he expected to find a corpse on the coffin lid.

"*Did Byron Die a Methodist?*" is the title of an article in an early number of the *Review of Reviews*. There seems good reason to trust that he died a true penitent and a true believer. Such at least is the testimony of the American Methodist who attended him when on his death-bed. The account was published many years ago.

The neighbourhood of Watnail was charming. Within a pleasant walk are Greasley church and the remains of the once formidable Greasley castle, the remnant of its massive masonry now serving the purposes of a quiet farmstead. I often looked with interest at Greasley church as the place where one of the most vigorous writers of the last century, Bishop Warburton, began his clerical career. For, judging from what I had then read of Warburton, his famous work on *The Divine Legation of Moses*, the extracts from his pamphlet on *The Office and Operations of the Holy Spirit* made by Wesley in his redoubtable reply, and from the sketch of him in Cunningham's *Lives of Eminent Englishmen* (a charming book, and well worth reading), it is only as a writer that he is worthy of remembrance. His strong and sturdy English is well worth studying; but his spirit was that of a thoroughbred State-churchman. I find that in my Journal I apply to Warburton the word "*acer*"; and I still think that in its widest sense it is most characteristic of the man. His very name seemed to me the symbol of his polemic and defiant personality. Nevertheless he seems to have been a true man in his way and according to his light, though a mundane *episcopos*.

Our next place in numerical strength was Eastwood, where we had a neat chapel and a nice, but not large, congregation. There Church-influence was very strong, the clergyman, Mr Plumtree, being a member of one of the wealthiest and most popular Evangelical families in the kingdom. He was a preacher of repute, and a laborious visitor of his people; but he made no secret of his dislike of Methodism, both as Non-conformist and as Arminian. Our principal families lived at

Langley Mill, amongst them being one with whom I had become acquainted in my childhood, the Flintoffs, who had migrated from Lasingham in the Pickering Circuit. To converse with Mr Flintoff was a means of grace ; his sufferings were great, but his faith and hope and love were greater still.

Then came the Brinsleys, Old and New, with a well-conditioned mining population. Our flock at Old Brinsley was peaceable, orderly, loyal, and respectful ; but at New Brinsley our Society was in a state of chronic fermentation, the like of which I never met with except in times of Connexional convulsion. The powerlessness alike of superintendent and "young man" to reconcile the contending parties was very humbling to us both. The fourteen miles' walk to and from Ilkeston and New Brinsley on a dark winter's night was richly overpaid by the spectacle of Codnor Park Furnace as looked down into from the road. Anything so Dantesque as the vision of the figures moving to and fro amongst the flame and smoke I have never gazed upon.

The sweetest spot in the Circuit was Stanton-by-Dale. Where now huge iron furnaces fume and flame there stood at that time an almost typical English village, a kind of undeserted Auburn. We preached in a cottage, the tenant of which was a saint of the first water, and intelligent withal, with whom it was a luxury to talk. The iron-stone was discovered whilst I was resident in the neighbourhood. About a mile to the right of the road from Ilkeston to Stanton stood the ruins of Dale Abbey, in what was then one of the most secluded, charming valleys in the kingdom. No one might pretend to have *done* picturesque Derbyshire who had not visited Dale Abbey. This sequestered nook was the birth-place of two remarkable Wesleyan Methodist ministers, Joseph Hollingworth and J. Thorpe Milner, the former an impassioned pulpit orator and a soul-saving preacher, the latter an exquisite homilist, with all the quiet beauty of his native dell. The opening of our little chapel at Dale Abbey is the subject of Montgomery's finest sonnet, the suppression of the abbey being commemorated in the line, "The glory is departed from thee, Dale" ; the building of the Methodist place of worship in the line, "The glory of the Lord is risen on thee, Dale."

We also preached statedly in a farmhouse in the village of Kirk Hallam, which from a grassy knoll looked forth upon a

quiet stretch of pastoral landscape. At Stanley Common we had a healthy, loving little Society, a sufficing chapel, and a popular and prosperous Sunday school. At the far-seen and far-seeing agricultural and mining centre, West Hallam, we had one class and a poor chapel. The leader was energetic, honest, sturdy, and in a good position, being the "butty" of a colliery. But he lived a mile and a half away.

During my year in Ilkeston I became delightfully familiar with the Methodism of Nottingham and the Nottingham Circuit, three of the five ministers being old friends of mine—Thomas Eastwood, William Wilson, and Thomas Nightingale. I was much pressed to preach in the town chapels, and bear a hand at public meetings. A tender tie connected me with Mr Eastwood; his son, whom he had just lost by drowning, had been a member of my first little experience-class of Grove boys. Mr Nightingale I had known as a hired local-preacher in Leeds, and an inmate in the house of the Rev. Joseph Fowler. Mr Wilson, distinguished as "Grammar Wilson" on account of his exquisite literary tastes, had just removed from Wakefield, where I had preached and attended meetings, and we had seen a good deal of each other. He had also been one of my warmest sympathisers during my troubles at the late District Meeting at Pontefract. He was seriously angry with me for resolutely refusing to either preach or take part in public meetings in any of the town chapels. But I saw clearly that it would discount the advantage derived from a quiet country Circuit to be ever and anon taking anxious, responsible, and exciting services in large town chapels. I told him, however, that I should be glad to preach sermons or attend meetings in village chapels on any occasion when some easily accessible stranger was desired.

As the Nottingham Methodists were wont to come out in force to these popular rural anniversaries, making them a sort of sober-minded substitute for the olden *wakes*, I thus became acquainted with a goodly number of our choicest families, who cordially invited me to their homes. I was the guest, in turn, of nearly all the principal Wesleyan Methodists of the place. Amongst these, the most towering figure was Mr Herbert, one of the leading manufacturers. His spirit was as magnificent as his physique. As a Life-Guardsman, he had fought at Waterloo alongside his rustic comrades, Shaw and Waplington. But

though they were rendered famous by their fall upon the field, and had their handsome monument in the churchyard of their native Cossall, close by Ilkeston, he had survived the long fierce struggle, and had reared his own memorial in a mighty manufactory and a noble mansion on the castle-hill.

The first time we met, the powerful man was keenly sympathetic, as I was suffering severely, and my "looks pitied" me. He enquired my symptoms tenderly, and comforted me with the assurance: "That's just the way I'm suffering; but then, mine's *fat* sorrow, and yours is only *lean* sorrow."

The twin-pillar of our Church at Nottingham formed a striking contrast to the ex-Life-Guardsman. This was Mr Clarke, a prosperous solicitor of very high repute. He had all the sedateness and the circumspection befitting his profession. He was always ready to take the chair at a Missionary meeting, where his "speech" was "silvern," and his giving golden. His style was lucid and convincing, and as deft in dealing with facts and with statistics as a veteran practitioner in Westminster Hall or in Lincoln's Inn. His was *Systematic* Beneficence which went far beyond the bounds of *Proportionate Giving*. I found him very cordial as a host, but was naturally more attracted by the chivalrous, impulsive Herbert.

The patriarch of our Nottingham Society at this time was Mr Carey, and a most fatherly heart was his. But the family to which I most strongly gravitated was that of Mr Peet, a manufacturer.

The rural Methodism of the Circuit was of a texture just as strong and fine. One of my most delightful trips was to Carlton. The early autumn morning drive to, through, and beyond Nottingham was luxurious. It was, as Wesley describes it, "a lovely country." I spent a blessed Sunday with Mr Aslin, a gentleman-farmer, whose fields sloped gently to the banks of the Trent, opposite the lovely little village of Holme Pierrepont. Mr Aslin was a memorable old Methodist, brother of the Rev. John Aslin, an "able minister of the New Testament" for nearly half a century. But the jewel of the place, to which the scenery seemed but the setting, was Mr Aslin's niece, since so widely known in Methodism as the wife and then the widow of the Rev. William Bacon, and as the head of an educational establishment in Lincoln. In returning, I drove lingeringly past the delicious woods, the secluded,

stately hall, and the ivied church of Colwick, made classic ground by Byron and by Moore as the home of Mary Chaworth, the object of the former poet's first and deepest love, and the "Mary" of his impassioned, youthful verse.

An ample guerdon for my services at Beeston on the Sunday and at the Missionary meeting was the friendship of the Kirkland family, with whom I stayed. Henry Kirkland was already in the ministry, and in his second year in the Belper Circuit. On account of his great stature, his extreme slimness, his shyness and retiringness—one might say retreatingness—his ruminant habits, his mildness and his gentleness, and the abnormal length of his neck, I used to call him the *giraffe*.

Through preaching at Basford, then a village, now a suburb, I became acquainted with another first-class Methodist family, that of Mr Oliver, father of the Mr Oliver whose charmed guest I was to be in later years, along with Dr Punshon and Dr Gervase Smith. Such men as Mr Ashin, Mr Kirkland, and Mr Oliver were the bond-timber of our village Methodism, giving it stability and respectful public recognition, through their social status, their solid business character, and their simple, kindly devotion to the cause of God and man.

I acquired another remunerative friendship by preaching twice at Arnold, which was even then a busy, thriving neighbourhood, with a large Methodist chapel, though it still retained a surprising beauty of umbrageous undulation, as one of the ancient glades of Sherwood Forest. A sort of poetic prestige was given to the spot by the provincial dropping of the last letters of its name; they called it Arno' Vale, as if to claim for it a classic as well as a romantic charm, and to connect it with the fair Italian stream which "th' Etrurian shades, high overarcht, imbower." My host was a druggist, a man of considerable culture and of much refinement. Best of all, a backslider was converted at the evening service, who "recovered his forfeited peace" at the after prayer-meeting, which I was constrained to continue till past ten o'clock.

In March, 1842, my health again became so feeble that my kind friends, Mr and Mrs Taft, insisted on my consulting Dr Melson, and persuaded my kind superintendent to give me a week's change. For this they provided me with ample pecuniary means, adding, "and whatever is more I will repay thee." The tenderness of one, who had the seeming and the

reputation of hardness and of sternness, towards a young sprig so diverse from herself was most affecting. And it continued to the end of her devoted life. At the last Conference she attended, that of 1844, at which I was ordained, she called at my lodgings, and said: "You used to suffer from cold feet. I've brought a pair of stockings knitted on purpose for you, such as you could not buy anywhere." Such simple, motherly thoughtfulness of the stern and strong revivalist to an imaginative young preacher brought the tears into my eyes.

That week's *outing*—not only improved my health but strongly influenced my after life. I copy from my journal:

"*March 16, 1842*—Walked from Ilkeston to Long Eaton to take the train for Birmingham from Long Eaton. It was a still, delicious day. 'The holy time was quiet as a nun breathless with contemplation.' It had the sober, contemplative spirit of Autumn, along with the exhilaration and the hope of Spring. From Derby my companion was Mr Clarke, the Methodist attorney of Nottingham. He is the most liberal man I know. He is a bachelor, and saves nothing, but gives away his last penny. He dotes upon the Income Tax, because it relieves the poor at the expense of the rich. He is a Radical and a saint. He is very delicate, yet keeps himself in perfect health. He is a great talker, yet never says an idle word. He is scrupulously conscientious, yet not censorious, ascetic, yet not morose. He is popular without pride, and a teetotaler without acidity."

I spent the rest of my holiday at Redditch with my friends the Smethams. The young preacher, the Rev. T. Moss, father of the Rev. Richard Waddy Moss, being stricken down with illness, I "was like to" take his work both morning and evening in the Redditch pulpit. The result was my invitation to the Redditch Circuit, and the consequence of my appointment to that place my union with the dear companion of my joys and sorrows for the space of four and forty years.

On my return journey I spent a night in Birmingham at the house of the most audacious and indomitable of all my schoolfellows, who had found a fitting sphere for his daring and determination in the secret service of the Government and as a reporter for, first a leading London paper, and then for a famous Birmingham journal. He showed me a letter from Sir Robert Peel, acknowledging and rewarding the service he had rendered to the British Ministry by the dexterity and pertinacity with which he had wormed out for them a secret of the French Government, which it was essential for our own

Government to discover. My friend introduced me to a poetic star which had just appeared above the horizon, the Editor of a well-known Birmingham newspaper, the Nonconformist Ragg, who was to have equalled Pollok, but, alas! the strongest point of resemblance was his premature setting. He had the look of a man of genius. As I read his poem by the gleam of those feverish, flickering eyes, and of that hectic, incandescent face, I was prepared for the intelligence of his early death. He has no passages to be compared with Pollok's noblest stanzas—his description of Lord Byron, of the dying mother, and of the dissolution of the universe; but his poetry is more sustained and equable than is *The Course of Time*.

The District Meeting week at Nottingham I much enjoyed; my home being with the Peets, who contrived the most ambrosial supper-parties. Business was transacted in a quiet, pleasant, and efficient way. The Chairman, the twice-President George Marsden, seemed to communicate his own placidity and evenness, his recollectedness and imperturbability to the whole conduct of affairs.

At the time of which I write, George Marsden was in the fiftieth and last year of a devoted and successful ministry, and the seventieth year of his age.

At the District Meeting he read our Book Lists and gave us wise and fatherly advice about our reading; but the German names on my own List completely *brought him up*, so, with that "*celestial quaver*" in his voice which Everett so wittily describes, he massed them under one category: "*by various authors.*" He being tall and shapely and with a reverend and saintly aspect, his appearance in the pulpit was impressive and respect-commanding. His delivery both in preaching and in giving out the hymns was animated to a high degree. But his greatest power was in prayer. I have said elsewhere that five men of my acquaintance excelled all others "in mighty prayer," when called on suddenly to exercise that gift: Alexander M'Aulay, Luke Tyerman, Samuel Fiddian, Peter M'Owan, and George Marsden.

Mr Marsden was very hospitable, and comported himself, as a host, with a gracious, genial dignity, as I can testify from personal experience. The late Rev. John Vine described to me a remarkable physiological phenomenon which he witnessed after dining with Mr Marsden and a large party. Grace after

meat having been offered, the devout old minister proposed a hymn and prayer. He rose and stood upon the hearth-rug, gave out the line, "What are these arrayed in white?" and fell flat in a deathly fainting fit. Restoratives, however, brought him back to consciousness, and the moment he recovered he rose to his feet and resumed the hymn at the second line, "Brighter than the noonday sun"—as if no grim parenthesis had intervened. The effect was so comic that the brethren had no small difficulty in starting the tune with the line given out a quarter of an hour before, and almost obliterated from their recollection by their anxiety about the life of the imperturbable ex-President.

Of George Marsden, as of Mordecai, it might well be said he was "accepted of the multitude of his brethren, seeking the good of his people, and speaking peace to all."

Our Financial Secretary's true element was a revival prayer-meeting. He read the solemn item, £2 7s. 6d., in the same funereal tone and cadence as he gave out, "And am I only born to die?" The brother on whom descended most richly the answer to the invariable petition for "those who take a more active part in the business of this meeting," and the man whose appearance struck me more than that of any other, was the Rev. John Greeves, father of the late Revs. John Wakefield, Francis, and Frederick Greeves, D.D. He was Superintendent of the Derby Circuit. He was in the twenty-seventh year of his ministry, and died four years later.

I was requested to attend a missionary meeting at the Independent chapel, where I heard a memorable man, Richard Knill, who foretold Charles Spurgeon's future greatness whilst yet he was a boy. Knill had laboured in St Petersburg, and had been expelled by the Emperor Nicholas. He was "a proper man" to look at, and neither frost nor heat had blanched the English hedge-rose on his cheek, nor shrunk his stature, nor chilled his ardour, nor unstrung his energy. After the meeting he told his host that he was due on the next evening at a meeting in the North, to reach which in time would require his catching an early morning train at Belper. There was no public conveyance, and the distance by road was nine miles. His host said: "I could let you have my horse and trap; but I am quite fast for to-morrow, and can't spare a man to take you there and bring them back." "I'm your man," said I.

“‘It were a journey like the path to heaven’ to go with Mr Knill to Belper.” So on “the top of” a delicious summer morning I had sweet communion with this spiritual hero as we wound along the lanes of Derbyshire; and as we talked of mission-work in India and Russia I realised the lovely lines:

“Cool grows the hot and sickening calm,
Dissolves the frosty twine;
The pine tree trembles to the palm,
The palm tree to the pine.”

I was so impressed by the spiritual-mindedness of Knill that his foretelling Spurgeon’s greatness as a preacher caused me no surprise, and I readily accept Spurgeon’s testimony with regard to him: “He never looked into a young face without yearning to impart some spiritual gift. He was all love, kindness, earnestness, and warmth, and coveted the souls of men as misers desire gold.” Amongst the many memorable men whom it has been my happiness to hear and to converse with I must give a high place to Richard Knill.

The Baptist “Cause” at Ilkeston had so long been pastorless as to have dwindled to the very verge of extinction, though they had a neat and cosy little sanctuary. It had almost come to be a contradiction of the philosophic axiom: “There can be no cause without an effect.” If ever there were an effectless “cause,” it was this. However, during the year a returned missionary from India, well-known through his little books on Hindoo life, made popular by a profusion of wood-cuts, accepted the charge of the Baptist Church at Ilkeston and one or two adjacent villages. He at once changed the “cause” into an “interest.” He found it much easier to allure members from other churches than to win them from the world. With prepossessing manners, he gained access to our families as a colporteur of his own pictorial publications, and then, in Daniel Isaac’s phrase tried “to make ducks of our chickens.” He was far less successful in Ilkeston than in Heanor, where our people were “shaken in mind” and “troubled” by his arguments and his persuasions. My informant on this matter was Gervase Smith, who had just begun to preach. The affair became so serious that young Gervase was requested by leading members of our society to ride over to Belper, lay the case before my father, and request him to

preach upon the subject on the next Lord's Day when he was the appointed preacher. He found my father, at first, very impracticable, and not at all pleased with the suggestion, as his mind was already filled with two discourses which he had been brooding on for days. He urged that it was unreasonable to ask him, at such a short notice, to deal with a subject which required such careful handling. But Gervase, even then, was not easily got rid of. He pressed the urgency of the case, and the confidence which the people had in my father's judgment as a theologian. At last the old minister complied, and Gervase took good care to blaze abroad the fact.

Gervase had informed my father that the point on which the people were the most perplexed was the assertion that "Baptism" in Scripture always means *immersion*, "plunging over," and that those who were only sprinkled have never been baptized, and have therefore never complied with our Lord's requirement, and cannot fairly claim to be members of His Church. My father's text was, "So shall he sprinkle many nations"; and he proved conclusively, alike from the simple and the symbolic language of the Scriptures, the inclusiveness of the word *baptize*, and that neither the quantity of water nor the mode of its application was of the essence of the rite. The result was the complete discomfiture of this foray on our sheepwalks and our folds.

A missionary meeting at the Baptist chapel, Ilkeston, gave me a welcome opportunity of hearing Mr Pike, the famous Baptist minister of Derby, and of publicly expressing my gratitude for the benefit I had derived in childhood from his *Persuasive to Early Piety*. He too was a very "personable" and presentable public man, with a healthy and benevolent countenance, and with—what was rarer then than now—an unconventional delivery.

During my year at Ilkeston I experienced the only attempt at violence and robbery which befel me on my many long and lonesome walks and drives at night through a succession of country Circuits. But on this occasion, Providentially, I was not companionless, otherwise it must have gone hard with me. On the day after preaching the New Radford Sunday-school sermons my evening appointment was to Brinsley, at least eleven miles from Nottingham. Mine host had persuaded me to linger so as not to leave fair

and reasonable time for meeting the engagement. So he offered to drive me to Brinsley, on condition that I should return with him; "for" said he, "I have no wish to cross Selstone Common in the dark and by myself; there have been some very daring robberies of late." I thankfully consented, as my Tuesday appointment was nearer Nottingham. As we were crossing Selstone Common on our way back, two athletic men leaped into the middle of the road and demanded to ride with us. My friend quietly and good-humouredly replied: "Mah lads, you see we haven't room." Whereupon one of them ran to the horse's head to stop it, and the other, at the same moment, with a confident adroitness which betokened practice—for we were driving briskly—fixed his right foot upon the iron step and his left knee upon the shaft, and clutched fiercely at the reins. My friend, having seen the situation in a "twinkling," gave his horse such a cut with the whip as made it shoot forward with an impetus that baffled the first man, and then drawing back his short, thick, muscular arm as far as possible, he drove his fist into the other ruffian's face with such force as to send him sprawling backward on the road. His "pal" had enough to do to pick up the stunned highwayman, so we went on our way and we saw them no more.

In Spring, 1842, I attended a memorable Missionary Meeting at Ripley. The three chief speakers, Peter M'Owan, Hodgson Casson, and Alfred Barrett, were as antithetical in their individuality, their gifts and modes of ministration as can be well imagined. M'Owan preached in the afternoon, and rose to the very height of his power. The earlier half of the discourse was disappointing, being tame and level and unimpassioned; but the latter half I never heard surpassed for vividness, startlingness, and exquisite aptness of illustration, for the white heat of spiritual fervour, and for irresistible impetuosity of declamation. M'Owan was then in the full vigour of his manhood, and on the meridian of his mighty ministry—short, thick-set, with black, bushy locks, and with eyes like live coals from off the altar.

At the evening meeting, Mr Barrett, then in the tenth year of his ministry, made the opening speech:

"Calm, refined, and tender
Like the moon in gentle splendour
Shining o'er the peaceful main."

Mr Barrett's beautiful monograph, *Christ in the Storm*, was an expansion of this speech. M'Owan was at this time of life as powerful on the platform as in the pulpit. His sentences were like himself, short, stout, and strongly built, and struck one with an impact against which one had no heart to hold out. Casson was by this time more than half worn out by unconscionable labour—was, in fact, a shattered epileptic; his place of power was not the platform, but the pulpit and the prayer-meeting. Yet his speech at Ripley came in, between the delicate richness of Mr Barrett and the juicy strength of Peter, like some piquant relish at a banquet. He gave his comic genius the amplest play. But his grotesque, bizarre similitudes were not at all to the taste of the high-strung, reverential Scot.

My year at Ilkeston was, thanks to Brother Hudson's kind advice, a time of strenuous, sturdy, yet voluptuous reading. As I had to be my own Theological Institution, I drew out a plan of study, which, like the stream of Eden, was "parted" into "four heads": Biblical Interpretation, Homiletics and Theology, Metaphysics, and the mastery of the English tongue. As to the first named, I have described elsewhere the heart-leap with which I welcomed Ernesti's *Instruction of an Interpreter of the New Testament* (*Institutio interpretis Novi Testamenti*). I have also shown my disappointment at every Commentary that had fallen in my way, excepting Wesley's *Notes*, on account of the conspicuous absence of any settled canons of interpretation. These I had from the very first been groping for and feeling after; for I saw that a prime prerequisite in one whose business is "reasoning out of the Scriptures," and of a true, a *Biblical* theologian, is what Ernesti well defines as *subtilitas intelligendi et explicandi*, which I may render, a *fineness* and inwardness and exactitude in first eliciting ("opening," Acts xvii. 3) and then unfolding the real meaning of "God-breathed Scriptures." I had learned from Luther, through Wesley, that *Theology must be based, in the first instance, on Grammar*, being derived from written documents. I saw also that, the case being so, the expositor must be on the best terms with the lexicographer and grammarian. Alas! in that day we had no Moulton's *Winer*. It was a grand thing for me, so early in my probation, to get hold of firm and satisfying principles, and of clear, convincing rules of Biblical In-

trepretation. Hagenbach, no mean authority, truly testifies that Ernesti's book "opened a new epoch in the history of hermeneutics, and founded the Grammatico-historical school." It might well open a new epoch in the mental history of a Bible-student but just turned one and twenty.

My next book was Tittmann's *Synonyms of the New Testament*, in which I revelled, though I had to carefully pick the fine small bones of rationalistic prepossession from my delicious whittings. I then betook myself to Tholuck on the *Romans*, a work of permanent value. But its most telling content was its introductory history of the rise of German Rationalism, which put me on my guard against the seductions of that specious assailant of the Holy Scriptures. My next book was Planck on *The real Nature and Genius of New Testament Greek*, a book well worth one's while.

Assuredly the books I read between September 1841 and September 1842 had no lack of mental albumen or casein, of phosphates or of iron. In divinity I was most engaged on the great initial question of the relations of Reason to Revelation and to faith, a question which every theological thinker must settle for himself as soon as may be. Much as I had learned from Locke, Butler, and Richard Watson, I was still consciously in need of further light. My mentor, Mr Goodwin, strongly advised me to procure the works of Philip Skelton, who dealt more largely in these questions than any other man he knew. The works were out of print, but he knew of just one copy, in the shop of the famous preacher and bookseller, Mr Philips, of Northampton. I at once wrote and secured the scarce seven volumes. I was the more inclined to this because of the high opinion which Wesley had recorded with regard to "Skelton's Works": "He is a surprising writer. When there is occasion, he shows all the wit of Dr Swift, joined with ten times his judgment; and with (what is far more) a deep fear of God, and a tender love to mankind." Skelton well deserves the praise which Wesley gives him, and that fine and practised book-taster has, with his usual critical tact, just touched the points in which the worthy author so surprisingly excelled. Skelton's style is strong, limpid sparkling, scintillating, and he is a wit as well as a reasoner and adjudicator. But wit upon the bench or in the pulpit is not so helpful, as a rule, as it is at the bar or on the platform.

Indeed, Skelton is better at a surprise than at a siege. He can make a dash at a strong position and capture it with all the coolness, keenness, and decisiveness of Sir Charles Napier or John Ship; but he lacks the scientific patience indispensable to the regular investment of a city strongly fortified and garrisoned. And his genius is more polemic than didactic. These defects have kept Skelton outside the ranks of Christian classics. Yet I found him well worth reading; the introductory biography is especially interesting. He is "quick, apprehensive," he exhales a healthful spirit, devout and benevolent.

I next betook myself to Halyburton's *Natural Religion Insufficient*, to me a most convincing book. Halyburton's saintship has cast into the shade his fame as a Professor of Divinity. The keen, strong eyes of one of Scotland's truest theologians pale beneath the aureole which glows upon his spacious brow. Halyburton foresaw and foretold the invasion of Rationalism, and built up against it this massive breakwater. It must be confessed, however, that Halyburton had not acquired that exquisite English which lends a witchery to the writings of so many of his later compatriots.

The only other strictly theological book which occupied me much during my year at Ilkeston was Horbery on the *Scripture Doctrine of Future Punishment*. It is an able book, but I found that, after all, I must think the subject out for myself. I arrived at two points; (1) That we must confine our conclusions on the subject to the case of those who reject or "neglect so great salvation," not complicating the question with that of the destiny of the unevangelized. This I derived from St Paul's hermeneutic canon: "We know that what things soever the Law saith, it saith to them who are under the Law" (Rom. iii. 19). By parity of reasoning, we also know that *what things soever* the Gospel saith, it saith to them who are under the Gospel. The appalling penalty denounced against an equally appalling crime of stubborn, sullen, or recklessly defiant refusal of salvation must not be assigned by us to those who never had the refusal of the Gospel. The freeness and all-inclusiveness of the Gospel-offer is the necessary correlative of the doctrine of Eternal Punishment. So my favourite text for a missionary sermon was, "Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been

spoken to you : but seeing ye *put it from you*, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles. For so hath the Lord commanded us" (Acts xiii. 46, 47). Another favourite text was, "The wickedness of folly." (2) That God alone can adequately estimate the enormity of the guilt of rejecting or neglecting so great salvation.

I resumed the study of homiletics from the example of the masters of the art. The next book was also taken up on the recommendation of Wesley. In his *Journals*, under date May 23, 1765, I found the following record : "Lighting on a volume of Mr Seed's *Sermons*, I was utterly surprised. Where did this man lie hid, that I never heard of him all the time I was at Oxford? His language is pure in the highest degree, his apprehension clear, his judgment strong. And for true, manly wit, and exquisite turns of thought, I know not if this century has produced his equal."

My next two volumes of sermons were taken up at the suggestion of a widely different authority from Wesley, and yet in some respects a very competent authority. In reading what, as I think truly, Coleridge pronounces to be one of Sir Walter Scott's best stories, *Guy Mannering*, I came upon a description of the preaching of Dr Erskine, co-pastor of the historian Robertson in Edinburgh.

I found that Erskine's published sermons fully sustained the high opinion recorded of them by such a powerful intellect as Walter Scott. The sermon which most of all affected me and my preaching was that on *Self-denial*, in which the preacher shows, from our blessed Lord's example, that true Christian self-denial does not consist, as is commonly supposed, in abstaining from hurtful self-indulgence, but in foregoing for the good of others what in itself is not only innocent, but even advantageous to oneself.

The next preacher whose works I read was also a Scotchman, but cast in a very different mould from Erskine. This was Dr Blair, to whom I was drawn from having read his *Rhetoric* and *Belles Lettres*, and by the fact that my father's library contained a well-printed pocket edition of his sermons, which rendered them very companionable on a stroll. His sermon on the *Union of Joy and Fear in Religion* is well worth reading, and so competent and strict a judge as Foster justly gives a high place to his discourse on *The Universal*

Diffusion of Christian Knowledge. The discourse which told most powerfully on me was that upon *The sympathy of Christ*.

My next instructor in the art and mystery of preaching was, strange to say, another Scotchman, Bruce. I found him also in my Supernumerary father's library, and have never seen another copy since, though I have heard of one in the possession of a wealthy local preacher.

I must here acknowledge my years' long indebtedness to the Scotch Moderates, Macknight, Blair, and Bruce, and to two of Channing's sermons—those on *Likeness to God* and *The Character of Christ*. The real strength of the Scotch Moderates, and subsequently of the Unitarians in America, did not consist, as is generally supposed, in their substitution of morality for doctrine. That was their weakness. Their strength lay in the prominence they gave to two grand elements of Christian theology which had strangely fallen into the background—the Fatherhood of God, and the human Sympathy of Christ.

The doctrine of the Redeemer's human sympathy I sensitively blended with that of His essential Godhead. Of the six sermons I wrote during my year at Ilkeston, two of the most telling were on "When ye pray say, Our Father," etc., and on Hebrews ii. 14: "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same," etc. I drew together these two rich hangings of the Holiest of all by the silken cords and silver couplings of the three fine-twined verses: "For both He that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one (one *Father*, and therefore one *nature*): for which cause He is not ashamed to call them brethren, saying, I will declare Thy name unto My brethren, in the *midst* of the *Church* will I sing praise unto Thee. And again, I will put my trust in Him" (Heb. ii. 11-13). I was much disappointed, however, to find that, in the Midlands, expository preaching was far less set by than topical preaching; always excepting Dr Newton's bright and breezy exegesis.

My next collection of sermons was of great historic interest, but to me of still greater homiletic value. I found on my father's bookshelves some unique, quaint-looking volumes, so humorously described ten years afterwards by Carlyle, in his *Life and Letters of Cromwell*, as "dumpy" and as extremely scarce. These contained sermons preached before the Houses

of Parliament during the Civil War and Commonwealth. What struck me most of all was the modicum of political allusion at a time when Church questions were decided less by Erskine's "energy of argument" than by push of pike and hard pounding of artillery. The best of it is that the appeal in these discourses is always, only, absolutely to the arbitrament of Holy Scripture. What could be more exquisitely appropriate than John Owen's text at Westminster Abbey to Cromwell's second Parliament? "What shall one then answer the messengers of the nation? That the Lord hath founded Zion, and the poor of His people shall trust in it" (Isa. xiv. 32). I was much impressed and charmed by the sermon on 1 John i. 1, "That which was from the beginning," etc.; by that on Rev. xii. 1, "And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars"; that on Amos vii. 2, "By whom shall Jacob arise? for he is small"; that entitled *Anthropolatria*, on "Let no man glory in man"; and that on "the rebuilding of the prostrate wall of Jerusalem." I caught many a glowing spark from the torches and the beacons of these stout divines, whom neither the smoke of battle nor the flare of party warfare could blind to the real glory of the Church of Christ.

A volume of Bishop Hopkins' homely, hearty sermons gave an added element of strength and warmth.

The popular demon whom it was at this time the preacher's duty to exorcise was the Socialism of Robert Owen: a "lubber-fiend" who built factories and formed communities, and aimed at a reconstruction of society on atheistic and materialistic principles. Its chief ally was Phrenology, which wasted all its substance as a science by dalliance with the favourite familiar of the Socialists—the degrading dogma that man is the creature of circumstances. I was therefore obliged to prepare a sermon in defence of the spiritual nature of man, and of experimental and vital godliness as the help-all and heal-all for the individual and the community alike. My text was, "Return unto thy rest, O my soul"; its divisions being: (1) Every man has a soul of his own—conscious, realizable, to which direct personal appeal may be confidently made: "O my soul." (2) That man's soul is naturally off its centre, and therefore in a state of unrest: "Return unto thy rest, O my soul."

(3) That God alone is the rest of the soul, and in returning unto God, it returns to its "rest."

All this time, by way of recreation, I was studying the literature and language of my native country under some of its great masters. Amongst these was Dr Johnson's *Lives of the Poets*, which I had previously read, but before I was ripe for it. I learnt from it some fine, firm principles of criticism, and could not but admire its sturdy stateliness of language, though I confess I enjoyed still more Izaak Walton's *Lives*, read during the same year. I also read about half of Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, but was wearied out by his unbending dignity of diction, and by the unrelieved monotony of his majestic cadences. His style is evidently formed on that of Tacitus and Sallust, and has the epic elevation and much of the sententious massiveness of his Roman models. This is admirably adapted to the grandeur of his theme, but it palls for want of variety and elasticity. Yet when thoroughly interested in his hero, as in the case of Mohammed, Belisarius, Stilicho, or even Claudian the poet, he takes on no little of the ease and elegance of the *Agricola*.

I also read Dickens' *Barnaby Rudge*, which had just come out; on which I find the following entry in my journal: "The humour of Charles Dickens I find most refreshing, and on the whole very healthy. I know no comic writer in whom there is less to offend or to corrupt. His sketches of low life and vulgar character are every bit as true as Crabbe's, but not so cynical or so repulsive. He makes the manners, sentiments, feelings, and ideas of the lowest classes full of interest to the higher, brings the outcasts of society within the circle of the human family, and obtains for them a share in its common sympathy."

CHAPTER X

REDDITCH AND KETTERING

MEANWHILE I was searching, as for hid treasure, for the clew to a solid, satisfactory system of thought and science of thinking. My object was primarily practical. I was conscious that my mind was too *tangential*; and my sermons, for the most part, were sadly lacking in consecutiveness, and therefore in wholeness. They were made up of semi-detached ideas, and of imagery exposed as if in a gas-lit showroom, rather than statuary and painting æsthetically arranged in some educational exhibition or well-sunned gallery of art. I wanted to secure on all important subjects, as far as possible, the intellectual sufficingness of Euclid's demonstrations. Watts and Aldrich (Whately I had not yet seen) gave a fair equipment for legitimate argumentation, but I craved some self-satisfying process in the domestic economy of the palace of Truth.

I procured Isaac Taylor's *Elements of Thought*, which somehow did not meet my case. (Archbishop) Thomson's *Outline of the Necessary Laws of Thought* was not published till the next year, and even it, though an interesting contribution to the history of human thought—one of the most fascinating of all subjects—did not prove to be just what I wanted. I had studied closely in my boyhood Watt's *Improvement of the Mind*, and, six years later, Todd's *Student's Manual*; but I learned little from the former excepting the way to strengthen the memory, and next to nothing from the latter but some useful physiological caveats. So, like any other Yorkshire workman, I had to "fen for mysen." I set to work to frame for myself a sort of *Intellectual System*.

The first course of this tower, whose top was to "reach to heaven," is still in my possession in the form of a document entitled, *An Enquiry after Truth*, dated "October 21, 1841." It begins thus:—

"I can only think of eight ways of reaching truth: innate ideas; consciousness; sensation; perception; mathematical demonstration; induction from ascertained and correlated data; deduction from assured principles; and competent and trustworthy testimony. As to the first of these, I am personally altogether unconscious and unaware of any innate idea whatever; or any such thing as an *intuition*, unless by intuition be meant a satisfied perception of something *presented* to the mind. So far as I can recall and analyse my earliest mental, moral, and spiritual experience, my religious ideas have been received from instruction, and that, directly or indirectly, from the Holy Scriptures, through home-teaching, hymnology, school-teaching, religious conversation, and the preaching of the word.

"An enquiry after Truth must start from some primary, unquestionable fact; this is found in *personal consciousness*; that is, the recognition of oneself by oneself, as a sentient being with certain faculties and organs, more or less adjusted to, and therefore capable of taking cognisance of its own surroundings. Though I have no innate ideas, I have innate capacities, susceptibilities, and powers of perception, observation, classification, and discrimination. These powers, though not absolutely and invariably infallible, yet when mutually checked and corrected, and adequately trained and instructed, are for practical purposes trustworthy, and subservient to my well-being and advancement. In fact, it is in my nature to assume these powers and capacities to be trustworthy."

I find from my journal that I had to justify my taking Descartes' starting-point against "captious" objections by Beattie to the making the fact of one's own thinking the basis of one's system of thought and truth. It is interesting to note that I was able to defend myself by the example of Baxter, who in turn vindicates his own course by that of "Mr Richard Hooker in his *Ecclesiastical Polity*." Thus two great English theologians, both independently of the great metaphysical genius of France, hit upon the same initial axiom; Hooker many years before Descartes.

Through preaching Chapel Anniversary Sermons at Riddings—then still called "*the Riddings* or *clearings*," having been most likely an outskirt of Sherwood Forest—on Easter Sunday, I came upon a splendid find. I stayed at the house of a relative of my metaphysical young friend, Bryan of Heanor, from whom I had borrowed *Dugald Stewart*. I found mine host to be a very earnest metaphysician. Mr Bryan introduced me to Victor Cousin's work, *The True, the Beautiful, the Good*, which at once flung upon me a potent fascination. I found him to be one of the finest thinkers with whom I had yet

become acquainted ; though he was much greater as a thought-vivifying suggester than as a system-builder. One powerful element in Cousin's earliest works was his concrete way of dealing with abstractions, and that far less by argumentation than by expatiation. Cousin's reasonings in his earlier works led right up to the Personal God. I had to note with regard to him what I had already noted as to Descartes in my journal for 1841 : " I say nothing about the system which he founds or rather fastens on his initial axiom."

To one whose mind was almost always on full stretch, recreative reading was an absolute necessity. So I read some of Lever's racy, rollicking Irish Tales ; I also obtained, I doubt not providentially, access to a rich store of laughter-moving literature. Stapleford Hall, where the famous Sir John B. Warren, Admiral, Ambassador to Russia, and M.P. for Nottingham, lived and died, was at that time in the possession of a family who resided much abroad. It was committed to the care of two members of my flock. Its chief treasure was a splendid library. To this my good people, glancing an eye of pity on my bookishness and penury, gave me free access, and although, of course, not allowed to take books away, yet I was permitted to take whatever I pleased into the secluded, high-walled garden. I fastened on the books which I was least likely to meet with elsewhere. Hazlitt's article on *Thomas Moore* had aroused my interest in his political and social squibs, such as *The Fudge Family in Paris* ; and as every book was printed in the most luxurious type and on the finest paper, it was voluptuous to pace the delicious garden-paths or stretch oneself beside a bed of flowers and revel in the works of some of the choicest of our English humorists.

Another of the innumerable instances of the selection of Methodists for confidential positions was also conducive to my enjoyment and my health at this time. Mr Walker, of the great firm, Barber, Walker & Co., had just built a mansion near Eastwood, which he had surrounded by a pleasaunce, including a beautiful expanse of water. As the owner had not yet come into residence, the place was entrusted to two of our Eastwood Methodists, who gave me free access to the grounds, so that with a book for a companion I could rest and expatiate to my heart's content.

A change of Circuit involved a change of reading. I found

the Methodists of Redditch—my next appointment—exposed to quite another kind of aggressive error than that against which our churches in the Erewash valley had to be forewarned and forearmed. There the great foe had been Socialistic Atheism; here Tractarianism was our “gigantic foe.” An indefatigable clergyman, a native of the neighbourhood, with favourable antecedents and exceptional pulpit power, with a high reputation for learning, and red-hot from Oxford, had just obtained the incumbency at Redditch, where Methodism had long been the popular and prominent religion. Accoutred with the dazzling panoply of Puseyism, and sworn on the high altar of ecclesiasticism to extirpate all Dissent within the bounds of his own clerical domain, he claimed every resident as a member of his flock, and began his proselytising mission with dexterity and zeal. He addressed himself, first of all, to them of reputation, beginning with our only man of wealth, Mr Reading, a retired needle manufacturer. He piqued him on his social status and his intellectual superiority, and plied upon him his whole tool-box of ecclesiastic argument. Brother Reading, a revered and hearty class-leader, listened to his pleading with imperturbable good nature; then quietly said: “You know, sir, I’m no match for you; I’ve never been to college. But my neighbour, Father——(the Roman Catholic priest), is a very learned man, and has the subject at his fingers’ ends. Let us just step down to his house, and hear what he has to say upon the subject.” The Anglican declined the arbitration.

Roman Catholicism was unusually strong in Redditch and its vicinity. Its chapel was a towered and ornamental structure, and greatly through the influence of the Throckmorton family, where Pusey was a frequent visitant, the priest enjoyed a liberal endowment.

As it seemed desirable that I should master the Tractarian controversy, I got hold of the best books on the subject. Having already studied Powell’s *Apostolical Succession*, I now procured Isaac Taylor’s *Ancient Christianity*. This is, on the whole, a magnificent monograph.

The book I next studied was still more famous at the time. Goode’s *Divine Rule of Faith and Practice*. Against the “Oxford Tracts” Goode took up this position: “The early Fathers, far from taking the tradition of earlier Fathers as part of their rule of faith, or supposing that the full doctrine

was to be found there, in this as in other points made the Scriptures their rule." This he demonstrates by an overwhelming mass of evidence. Powell, Goode, and Taylor were the three mighties who breasted and bore down the High Church inroad, on its literary and historic side. From them I, for one, learnt how to refute the gainsayings of those who strove to draw away our people from the Scriptures and from the Church of their spiritual birth and upbringing. From Goode I learnt clearly the vital standard of appeal on Christian doctrine and morality. By Isaac Taylor, as by Vinet, I was confirmed in the conviction that the New Testament is the one pure spring of true Church principles.

Another of the great books of the time which I found most serviceable was D'Aubigné's *History of the Reformation* (during Luther's life-time). D'Aubigné's *History* was a most timely book for England, and I believe did more than any other to check the progress of High Churchism, by bringing out in a popular and striking way the points at issue between the Reformation and the Papacy, and by showing up the ludicrous and hateful aspects of the latter. Its greatest merit, and its noblest and its most enduring service, is the showing that the supreme authority of Holy Scripture is the very key of the Protestant position; that Romanism and Rationalism—Priestism and Free-thinking—are twin stems from one Satan-sown seed.

My first great master in homiletics during my twelve months in Redditch was a once famous preacher who has dropped into unmerited obscurity, Bishop Brownrigg, whom I took up at the recommendation of my dear friend, the studious, saintly Congregationalist minister. Brownrigg's *Sermons* are a mine and a museum of sparkling, solid epigrams.

Dr Whichcote's *Sermons* formed a striking contrast, and a wholesome and refreshing alternative to the luscious pungency of Brownrigg, his contemporary. Whichcote I found also in my father's study. Whichcote's *Sermons* display neither flash nor flush of genius. Their structure is not upon the model of the superb and exquisite chapel of King's College, Cambridge, of which he was the Provost appointed by the Parliament. No delicate and exquisite proportions here; no

"Storied windows richly dight,
Casting a dim religious light."

All is as homely and as innocent of decoration and as heedless of æsthetics as the plainest preaching house. My father's edition had a charmingly written Introduction by the literary and anti-evangelic Earl of Shaftesbury, the passing from which to the discourses was like stepping from a smooth-clipped lawn in the front of a mansion to a well-kept kitchen-garden at the back.

As is well known, the theological error which resulted in the only doctrinal secession which Methodism has yet experienced, though called *The Derby Faith* from the place which witnessed the secession, originated at Redditch (see Coley's *Life of Collins*, and my *Handbook of Scriptural Church Principles and Wesleyan Methodist Polity and History*, p. 195). Its originator was H. B., a schoolmaster at Redditch, whom I well remember, as everybody else must who ever heard him preach. He had a manful delivery and a prepossessing, influential personality. The split, however, did not occur till his removal to Derby. His doctrine was simple Sandemanianism and lies hard by that of Finney. He held that "saving faith is simply an exercise of powers inherent in our nature," and requiring no special help of God. He was powerfully seconded by his able and accomplished usher, an old Grove lad, Thomas Graham, who honourably resigned his place in our ministry, on finding himself definitively out of harmony with our doctrine. In my day, the discussion survived only amongst the local preachers, and was carried on with acuteness, but in the best possible spirit. Yet this quickened my interest in a question which had long attracted my attention. I had borrowed from my father's library *An Essay on Faith*, by the famous lay-theologian, Erskine of Linlathen. Erskine's strong point, as I took it, was that Faith derives its potency from its *object*. This I take to be St Paul's point also when he says that we are "justified by the *faith* of Christ" (Gal. ii. 16).

Another book of sermons which I studied with avidity at Redditch was the earliest theological publication of a man who was just rising to pre-eminence as a preacher, and with whom I was privileged in later years to be well acquainted: Thomas Binney's *Practical Power of Faith*. This book was the beginning of the great preacher's strength, published whilst he was yet an unknown young minister in the Isle of Wight. It has

about it all the fragrance of the lavender-fields of *Wymondley*, from the College of which he had just emerged.

Two other volumes brought from my father's library also occupied me at this time, but left slight traces on my mind : Waterland on *Justification* and Berryman's *Sermons*. The worth of Waterland's book lay chiefly in its sweet, scholarly style ; Berryman was a doughty controversialist and a preacher of repute, but he has dropped into obscurity.

The greatest *theological* work I read this year put the cornice and entablature upon the portico to my temple of truth. This was Ellis's *Knowledge of Divine Things from Revelation ; not from Reason or Nature*. I find from an entry in my journal bearing date, "Edenfield House, Doncaster, midsummer, 1841," that before reading either Ellis or Halyburton, I had puzzled over, and to some extent puzzled out, this question. My mind had been compelled "to *stand and deliver*" on the subject by some remarks by Dr Dixon, in his noble sermon preached at the opening of Wesley College, Sheffield, on *Religion Essential to the Completeness and Utility of Knowledge*. I find myself demurring to some of Dixon's points, which I attribute to a want of clearness of statement : "All that Dixon can mean is that Christianity is not dependent for its doctrines on reason, genius, or philosophy."

But the postulate of Ellis implied upon his title-page seemed to me to be conclusively made out, and that by virtue of the truly scientific method—historical investigation and careful and consistent exegesis. He demonstrates the incertitude of human reasonings upon religion by the endless changefulness and conflict of its decisions in the absence of a decisive standard of appeal. Yet he does full justice to the religious susceptibility of the human intellect, its natural adaptation for the reception of Divine truth when once revealed. Ellis becomes questionable only when he diverges into metaphysics. At least, I find myself, in my journal, characterizing as "captious" his strictures upon Locke.

This year I also read vol. x. of Wesley's *Works*, containing many weighty and instructive publications, highly illustrative of the personality of Wesley and of the development of Methodism from 1748 to 1788.

Almost the only recreative reading I had throughout this busy year was Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy*, a malady with

which I was again most grievously afflicted. It is a good recipe, and the richest repertory in the language of odd and out-of-the-way incident and observation, being far more varied, easy, and natural than Southey's *Doctor*. Its gossip tone and the quiet roguery of its tell-tale twinkle made it very medicinal for a brooding self-consciousness. But it should only be read by a few paragraphs at a time; one should not try to make a solid meal of anchovy paste.

Two other books read during this voluptuous year in company with James Smetham, Isaac Taylor's *Saturday Evening* and Cunningham's *Life of Sir David Wilkie*, are the subjects of two of Smetham's very finest and most characteristic Letters.

At the district meeting my poor little book-list was still more roughly handled than that of 1841 had been at Pontefract. My censors were two of the very best men in the district; Edward Walker, then of Birmingham, who had been one of my most manful defenders two years before at Pontefract, and James J. Topham, of West Bromwich. No book upon the list was at all objected to, but very severe animadversions were made upon the absence of the works usually comprised in a probationer's course. Mr Topham even went so far as to say that the volume of Wesley's *Works* was just put in to give the list a tinge of Methodism. Against this imputation I should have appealed to the chair, but that I happened to be in a most subdued frame of mind, having passed almost the entire foregoing night in a sleepless agony of tic, and being at the time in great suffering. It must have gone hard with me, but for the kindness of the most typical and old-fashioned Methodist preacher in the district, Father Blundell, who, coming up from a remote part of the district, had broken the journey at Bromsgrove, an old Circuit of his, where I had preached on the foregoing Sunday. Doubts having been expressed as to the spiritual element in my preaching, he at once rose to his feet, and said: "If the brethren had heard the two sermons which I heard from our young brother last Sunday, their minds would be quite at rest as to the *Methodist* quality of his preaching. I never heard two more downright Methodist sermons in my life. I wish we all preached like him." This was to my feeling "a hand out of the cloud." When he rose to speak I had not the

slightest doubt that he would testify against me, for I feared I had grievously offended him. Having walked six miles to my appointment on that Sunday morning, and being in a woebegone condition of watchlessness, I was vastly disconcerted by seeing, on ascending the pulpit stairs, the chapel clock report me five minutes late, and that a venerable ministerial stranger turned round to note the fact, and then cast a reproachful look upon me. When I met this same stranger at dinner he began by rebuking me for being "ten minutes late," to which I replied with, perhaps, undue piquancy: "Now, Father Blundell, if you must be five minutes wrong in your statement, would it not have been better to mentally put the clock five minutes back, instead of putting it five minutes forward, and to have said, like a Yorkshireman, 'You'd like to be too late'?" And as he had not said a word to me about my preaching, I concluded that he had nothing good to say. His testimony having been followed by that of my superintendent, as to my intense Methodicity, the chairman, Bernard Slater, said: "Well, let us see how much he knows about what he *has* read. Here's a capital book: Ellis on *The Knowledge of Divine Things*. Now, brother Gregory, tell us what is Dr Ellis' argument, and by what proofs he sustains it." As I had been so interested in the book as to make a synopsis of it, this was pretty plain sailing; but whenever I tripped the chairman caught me. The meeting cheered me heartily; but I requested the advice of Mr Topham as to the books which ought to appear on my list next year, the last of my probation. He thereupon named books every one of which I had read years before, most of them before I began to preach at all. At last Mr Topham gave up in exhaustion, and with a look of sheepishness most unusual to his manly face.

What I have told of Methodism in the Erewash valley fifty years ago is just as true with regard to the rich mineral and busy manufacturing district which stretches between the Yorkshire borderland of Derbyshire and the river Trent. It was a powerful and beneficent factor in a community well employed and comfortably circumstanced.

During the twenty years of my father's residence in Belper (1829-49) the Circuit was "as the garden of the Lord." On our arrival we found it in a state of high evangelistic activity.

There was a network of cottage prayer-meetings in all parts of the widely branching town. We had one, which was crowded and most earnest, in our cramped but scantily furnished little homestead. The "Common side" of the "miserable common" which the aged Wesley had to hobble over to get to the multitude waiting in the market-place, now "found a voice" of lofty praise, accompanied by the clink of nailers' hammers and the tones of ardent intercession, whilst drunken blasphemy was overawed to silence. Besides this there were regular week-night services in the two chapels wide apart—that in the main street and that in the Pottery—and one in the large house-place of Farmer Harrison, in Belper Laund, and another at the opposite end of the town—Cow Hill. We had also a regular system of Sunday evening prayer-meetings, and a well-served Prayer-leader's plan.

There was a strong body of local preachers, as the immense number of preaching places demanded. The ablest of the band by universal admission was my cousin, Joseph Gregory, of Heanor. He was, in any case, the deepest reader and the deftest theological reasoner of all the goodly company, but he died young. The most popular was our great political orator, Palmer; but any one who had heard him on the hustings must have been gravely disappointed by his pulpit *efforts*, for such they really were. Though an out-and-out good-natured and good-tempered brother, yet in talking from a text, he evidently felt that he was not at liberty to talk like other people. He took the *rôle* of philosophic theologian. When, for example, he propounded his physical theory of our Lord's escape from the taint of Original Sin, one's only comfort was that he was brilliantly illustrating the definition of metaphysics propounded by the blacksmith of Glamis: "When a mon's talkin', and naebody kens what heh's speerin' at, and *heh* doesno' ken hemsel' what heh's speerin' at—*that's* metaphysics." On the street-platform, he sent up successive jets of sparkling spray, which instantly hardened into glittering spar, which the hearer could neither part with, for it was unforgettable, nor refrain from communicating to his neighbours and friends. Its real spell was in its sudden surprise, by turning what seemed a fatal concession into a flashing refutation, the roguish twinkle in his eye both feathering the shaft and sharpening its point. Some of the brethren were much

addicted to "dictionary words," and severely criticised each other's "pronunciation." One worthy, well-known tradesman in the town gave a new name, in Methodist circles, to the largest and most historical denomination, whom he styled *Epicopylopians*, at that time suggestive of reliance on transmitted registers for the authentication of their claims. He described the evolution of evil, in the individual and in society, especially in the form of intellectual pride, as its "*devil-opement*."

As to social position, "a good few" Methodists in the Circuit were comfortably circumstanced. A large proportion of the principal tradesmen were Methodists. Of these the most notable was Mr John Topham, brother of the Rev. James Topham. He was very tall, and his face unusually long and white, with a kingly, intellectual, and refined expression. He was the most reserved and reticent man I ever knew, without morbidity, the very antithesis of his brother Thomas, of Belper, London, and Ripley, who was just as remarkably communicative, and who seemed to wear his heart upon his sleeve.

Amongst our best families in Belper were those of two farmers, Mr Samuel Harrison and the brothers Lichfield. Notwithstanding the distance of their residences from our chapel, Mrs Stevens (Mr Harrison's daughter) and the younger Misses Lichfield were amongst the most calculable attendants at the weeknight prayer-meeting. In their young womanhood, the intellectual and æsthetic refinement of them all was stamped upon their features, and on their easy, graceful bearing. Mrs Stevens had a rare epistolary gift, and was a devoted student of and an earnest correspondent on Entire Sanctification. Miss Lichfield was a charming talker and narrator.

I must not fail to mention two very marked members of the Belper Society; Mr and Mrs Saunders, teachers of the infant school. Mr Saunders had fulfilled a long course of military service, and had retired upon his pension; but finding himself at a loss for necessary employment, and having received a sound education before he enlisted, and having a natural taste for teaching, he had put himself under the best training and obtained the mastership of the newly erected elementary school at Belper. He certainly was a master of

the art ; his power of interesting the children in their lessons and attaching them to his own person was marvellous. To watch his processes was to me a bitter-sweet, as contrasting with the mode in which I had been taught, and the manner in which I had myself taught others. It was like the difference between travelling by carrier's cart and by railway train, the crampedness of the one and the ease and freedom of the other being included.

The fire of revivalism never died out in Belper, though it now and then died down, throughout this prosperous period. Its torch was Charles Mather, a working man, who had been converted from reckless drunkenness to intense devotion, through the preaching of Mrs Pattison. Mrs Pattison never ascended the pulpit, but delivered her message within the communion rail. No minister during the first fifty years of its existence had left behind in the Belper Circuit so many spiritual children. She was very much the most winning of the trio of preaching ministers' wives. I remember her right well.

If the spiritual temperature seemed lowering or the evangelistic ardour slackening in any of the principal societies, they would forthwith apply to Yorkshire for some redoubtable soul-winner—John M'Lean, or John Henley of Sheffield, or Jonathan Saville of Halifax, or "Squire Brooke" of Huddersfield.

No one in the Belper Circuit was worthier of memorial than Mr Bourne, of Denby Pottery. He occasionally "exercised the senses of the ministers his guests by half-serious and half humorous animadversions on their little" ecclesiastical "eccentricities." But he had in him neither bitterness nor mischief. As vastly the greatest employer in the parish, he had much influence, and he used it all for good. He was the venerable patriarch of the Society, beloved and esteemed alike as an employer and an earnest philanthropic Christian. For a man of his preoccupations, he was a great reader.

The next place in interest to me in the Belper Circuit was naturally Heanor, where still live my worthy connexions, Mr and Mrs Holmes. But of Heanor I have given a grateful account in an earlier part of these recollections.

One of the liveliest Societies in the Belper Circuit was that of Horsley Woodhouse. The principal man was Mr Weston,

a capable, energetic, and successful man of business, quick-witted, open-hearted, open-housed. The public estimate of him was shown by his election as a member of the first body of Poor Law Guardians for the Union, on its formation in 1834. He and his three sisters, Mrs Eley, Mrs Bunting, and Mrs Calladine, were an immense credit to their widowed mother, an old Methodist, a coeval of my father. She was a mother in Israel, and had infused into her children her own heartiness, strong sense, self-help, and enthusiastic attachment to Methodism and its pastorate.

The next in notability of our Woodhouse Methodists were the Holdens. From the name by which they went in the village, one might suppose that they were descendants of the Scandinavian war-god, for they were popularly designated "*Odin*." But a more peaceful generation you need not wish to find. In this case, too, the saintly mother had formed her children's character and trained them for usefulness. The elder son was for a whole generation a leading man in our King's Cross Society in London, as class-leader and as steward.

On my last visit to Woodhouse in 1879, I was much struck with the improvement in the juvenile population, and in the air of neatness, tidiness, and rural tastefulness in the cottage rows. Sixty years ago, the young Woodhousians were the most aggressive little ragamuffins I ever saw. On my last Sunday spent in Heanor also, I could not fail to note the decorum and sobriety of the colliers as contrasted with the rowdiness of the former generation.

The Methodism of Riddings, too, was of a charming type. Besides the Riddings branch of the Ilkeston Brentnalls and the metaphysical Mr Bryan already mentioned, there were two noteworthy families, the Taggs and the Walkers. One of the brothers Tagg migrated to London, where he became well known to Methodism in connection with Globe Road Chapel for many years. It was to me a delightful surprise to find that the two most cultivated, intellectual members of my flock in the Second London Circuit in 1844 hailed from the Belper Circuit. Mrs Ince, mother of the admirable Regius Professor of Divinity at Oxford, the most literary lady and the best converser in the whole Society, a consummate class-leader, the chivalrously appreciated friend of a long line of distinguished

ministers, was born and brought up at Bull Bridge, close by the present Ambergate station, some three miles from Belper. The venerable Thomas Jackson for a stretch of years spent Christmas Day with the Inces. Happily, I am not the only one left who can recall the ambrosial gatherings in their house in Southampton Street, Covent Garden. Gidley Howden also had a powerful intellect, but much less self-restrained than that of Mrs Ince.

The Taggs of Riddings were also fine specimens of Derbyshire Methodism. Mrs Tagg was a *character*, full of animation, *bonhommie*, piquancy. She had a wonderful *aviary*, and was a keen student of the individuality of her feathered pets, and, with a kind of Adamic insight, gave them names descriptive of their dispositions. One combative small songster, for example, she called "little *Animosity*": a quality this of which she was very tolerant in birds, though she never developed it herself. Both as a hostess and a talker she was richly entertaining. Her nephew, of King's Cross, London, had also a fine sense of humour, and was as good at an improvised epigram as an eighteenth century wit. In youth he published a poem of much merit and of more promise. He had a choice circle of literary friends, and the gatherings at his house would well compare with those at Mr Ince's. Here I became acquainted with Dr Stroud, author of the celebrated book on the *Physical Causes of the Death of Christ*, and found him a most genial and devoted Christian. Another of Mr Tagg's great literary chums was Dr Bialoblotsky, a converted Polish Jew, of portentous learning and amazing subtlety and minuteness of familiarity with the sacred languages. In that respect I have never met his like.

I must not omit to mention another estimable family connected with the Belper Circuit: the Peakes of Codnor. With them lived the only layman's son I ever knew who had been educated as a parlour-boarder at Kingswood School in Wesley's day. It was then at the height of its renown, attracting pupils from the West Indies, Denmark, Sweden, and Norway. His account of the severity and ineffectiveness of the discipline was in full accord with those of Adam Clarke and of the Founder himself. They made me all the more resigned to the hardships of Woodhouse Grove in my own earliest years.

It will be seen that the Methodist of South Derbyshire

were at that time, on the whole, a reading people. One fact impressed me greatly : wherever you went, to farmstead or to the home of prosperous master-workman, you might calculate on finding a copy of Clarke's famous *Commentary*. The first piece of luxurious furniture that a young Methodist would buy as soon as he found himself in a position to set up house-keeping was the voluminous exposition of the great Methodist saint and savant.

Our working men, too, especially the well-waged employés of the Messrs Bourne, were of a very high class—intelligent, cheery, and addicted to the week-night means of grace.

I must not overlook one of the best and best-mated preachers that Belper Methodism was ever blessed with. The Rev. Henry and Mrs Hine were my father's next door neighbours, and their attention to him in his last illness, and to my sisters after his death, demands a grateful record.

I have only described the two Circuits with which I was perfectly familiar. But I have reason to think that the Methodism of the contiguous Circuits was of the like pronounced and genuine stamp. That of Wirksworth, Cromford and Ashbourne has found a place in our modern classic literature, being sketched by two of the most powerful writers of the age, John Ruskin and George Eliot. The great art-critic and word-master has, in his magnificent *Modern Painters*, not thought his superb description of the still more superb scenery of the Via Gellia (*Vy-jelly*, as the natives call it) too sumptuous a setting for his wayside colloquy with a Cromford Methodist. Not even his correspondence with James Smetham gives a more edifying revelation of his vivid sympathies with vital godliness than the record of that incidental conversation. What a picture it would make ! and what a pity Smetham could not set himself to paint it !—that glorious wooded gorge as the sumptuous picture-frame, the two contrasted figures : the impassioned, highly cultivated man of genius, with his glowing physiognomy ; the large-limbed and strong-featured pensioner—a M'Gregor from the Hielands, converted during a campaign, and settled amidst scenery as romantic as his native home—engrossed in earnest spiritual communion on "the deep things of God."

Characters in *Adam Bede*, again, are life-sketches of the Methodism of South Derbyshire. Seth Bede (Samuel Evans),

local preacher and class leader of Ashbourne and of Wirksworth, is just a typical South Derbyshire Methodist ; always excepting his business incapacity as a master-carpenter, in which respect he forms a wondrous contrast to such men as Brother Bunting, of Heanor, and Brother Holmes, of Belper. Dinah Morris (Elizabeth Evans) was a famous female preacher at Wirksworth, who died in the true odour of sanctity in the same year as my father. The principal scenes are also laid in the Ashbourne and the Wirksworth Circuits. I may interject that nowhere can be found such a classic reproduction of the South Derbyshire dialect as in George Eliot's tales ; and nowhere is the genuine Derbyshire woman so perfectly depicted. I could have introduced my readers fifty years ago to more than one veritable Mrs Poyser.

The *Primitive Methodists* were very strong in Belper. It was in a sense their Antioch, being the place where they were first called *Ranters*. As "the Godly Club" in Oxford accepted the nickname Methodist, and tried to justify it by their habits, so "the Ranters" acquiesced good-humouredly in their popular sobriquet, and took no pains to refute it. They were a genial, hearty, earnest, and a much respected people, and the two Methodist bodies were on the most neighbourly terms. My father always cultivated the acquaintance of their ministers, who were generally picked men, such as Mr Gilbert and Dr Antliff, and afterward Mr Widdowson.

On Whitsunday, 1842, I preached for the Trust Funds at the quaint, antique, and pretty little town of Alfreton. Our drive back to Ilkeston on Whit Monday morning, through a continuous succession of thriving villages, seemed a perfect ovation. My friend Gamble, who took me in his *trap*, looked up at me archly, and said : "I had no idea you were so popular ; I hope you won't let this long triumphal procession turn your head." The greater part of the population, men, women and children, had turned out in their Sunday best, led by stout men in flaming uniforms, staggering under the weight of enormous banners, emblazoned both with golden legend and with significant device ; with thundering, blaring bands of music.

Whit Monday in that part of the country was the great day for the marching of both the men and the women's *Clubs*, and for Sunday school processions, treats, demonstrations.

The male officials and every female bore a symbolic wand, the hats were flaringly beribboned, while the bonnetless matrons wore the most becoming caps. It was a most pleasing and most animated sight, bespeaking brotherhood and thrift and cheerful plenty, the result of well-remunerated industry and well-directed religious activity.

The parting with my Ilkeston people brought out their kindly feeling. With a thoughtful, sensitive consideration of my tastes they got up trips to neighbouring places of literary interest. My last day at Long Eaton was devoted to a splendid stroll with the local preachers Orchard and Oldham. We crossed the Trent to the delightful agricultural village of Thrumpton. It would have been regarded by Matthew Arnold as a model village, for it had neither public-house nor Nonconformist chapel, and nestles, like a sleeping beauty, beneath umbrageous coverlet, and under the shadow of its heaven-pointing spire, and within the hearing of the lapping lullaby of the brimming river. Thence we strode to Gotham, and thence round to Barton-on-Stour, where we recrossed the Trent at the junction with the last named river.

On my last day in the Circuit, my friends got up a memorable trip to Annesley Hall and Newstead Abbey. The hills and hall of Annesley are perpetuated by Byron as the home of Mary Chaworth, when lost to him by her marriage to Mr Musters. The view translated one into the sixteenth century. The hall is "beautiful for situation," standing amongst its own far-stretching, profusely timbered fields, though the "hills of Annesley" are still "bleak and barren" as when Byron's "thoughtless childhood strayed" upon their windy summits. Happily for us, the owner was away; but the man in charge straitly questioned me as to whether I was a literary man, as his master had strictly forbidden him to admit any such gentry, since William Howitt had repaid his courtesies by severe reflections on himself. The scene with which Byron's *Dream* opens is easily recognised. The "gentle hill, green and of mild declivity," was now denuded of the two trees which were to it such an ornament and association. The prospect is a living landscape, with the waving woods and cornfields, and the abodes of men, scattered at intervals, and wreathing smoke from "rustic roofs." I now quote my journal :—

"With Newstead, notwithstanding the extravagance of my expectations, aroused by the exquisite descriptions of Washington Irving and Thomas Moore and Howitt, and by Byron's own delineations, I was far from being disappointed. The west front of the Abbey Church is a surpassing specimen of Early English, and is a type of Byron's finest poetry in strength and grace of composition and subtle delicacy of workmanship; and his own description of the stately fountain in the quadrangle applies equally to many of his bold, fantastic passages, "symmetrical but decked with carvings quaint." The parterres and pleasure grounds are worthy of a palace. The charmingly wooded landscape and the two expansive lakes indescribably enhance the beauty of the picture.

"When our party was announced, the gallant owner was at luncheon, but politely left the room before it was cleared away that we might not be delayed in our examination. We saw everything which Howitt mentions: the skull out of which Byron drank—a ghastly symbol of the Epicurean *cultus*, a sort of sacrament of death; 'the old Lord's devils,' etc."

I could find no more fitting text for my farewell sermon, in this and in every subsequent Circuit, than Galatians iv. 13, 14: "Ye know how through infirmity of the flesh I preached the Gospel unto you at the first. And my temptation which was in my flesh ye despised not, nor rejected, but received me as a messenger of God."

Before removing from the North Midlands to the South, I had another delightful glimpse at the fondly familiar Methodism of the West Riding and of Lincolnshire. The brief interspace between two Circuits was most congenially filled up by engagements to preach and address meetings at various places.

On Sunday, August 14, 1842, I preached the Sunday school Sermons at Pontefract, and in the afternoon addressed the teachers of all the Nonconformist Sunday schools in the town. My subject was: *The National Importance of the Sunday School and the Spirit and the Manner in which children should be taught Religion*. I have preserved the following passage:—

"Ideas are abroad which, if guarded by Christian knowledge and sanctified by Christian feeling, will at once soften and elevate individual character, and diffuse through all classes of society a spirit of brotherly goodwill; but Ideas which, unless thus corrected and hallowed, will unchain the worst passions of our fallen nature, will confound social order, blight all the happy domestic interests which flourish under the shadow of national stability and quiet, and at once tear up the hearthstone and the foundations of the Church of Christ."

Mr Moxon took me for a delicious drive, to see two of the "stately homes of England," first Frystone Hall, the residence of Richard Monckton Milnes. I find in my journal, under date August, 1842, the following entry :—

"Milnes belongs to the young Coleridgean Tory school of politics and literature. It brings into the cause of Conservatism all the glow and impulse which had heretofore been characteristic of 'the Apostles of Liberty.' These writers seem to me to occupy the like position with regard to High Church theory which the Transcendentalists have taken up with reference to Rationalism, Socinianism, and Channingism. Their aim is unquestionably both generous and holy. But is it practicable? is it direct? They doubtless possess both earnestness and depth of religious feeling, but the indistinctness and timidity of their religious sentiment and phraseology give little promise of their effecting any great and general increase of piety. And even could they create a compromise between Churchism and Rationalism, they would achieve a very questionable triumph. For Churchism and Rationalism are equidistant from 'the truth in Jesus.' The Tractarians would beguile us of our reward by a self-pleasing humility, while the Latitudinarians would exalt the human intellect and the human imagination above all recorded Revelation. Both schools are almost irresistibly seductive to a young, inquiring, and adventurous mind. But the startling sentiments, and the arresting energy, and the meteoric masses of brilliant, burning thought which inflame the fancy in reading Carlyle, Emerson, Goethe, Channing, exert the more potent fascination on a susceptible imagination like my own. I have read both sides eagerly and fearlessly, and to some extent have been caught in their snare. I have been conscious in reading them that the delicious infection had stolen into my soul, and have had to battle hard with pleasing phantasies. But, *Fuit!* Give me Wesley's hymns!

"I was much amused by the way in which Milnes eluded the question of one of his constituents, a Methodist tradesman. Brother T., being asked for his vote, replied, 'Mr Milnes, they tell me you are a Puseyite!' To which Milnes, nowise disconcerted, answered, 'Really, Mr T., I don't know what you mean by a Puseyite.' Certainly Mr Milnes did *not* know precisely what Brother T.'s definition of a Puseyite might be."

I was at least equally interested in the much more boldly situated mansion famous in the religious history of the last century as the seat of Lady Betty Hastings. It is in connexion with her name that Wesley makes his characteristic remark: "What is too hard for God? We see, even this is possible with God, to raise a lady and a saint in one person!" Lady Betty was no solitary saint: she devoted her wealth and influence to the cause of God and man.

Those who think the county of the late Poet Laureate to be one tame, unbroken level, should have the morning's drive of more than twenty miles that I enjoyed on August 19, 1842, along the "wolds" or "heights," which run on a line with the Lincolnshire coast, a few miles distant from it. From Caistor to Torrington there stretches a sweet succession of most picturesque agricultural villages, such as Binbrook, Normanton, Tealby, Willingham, Benniworth, and Sixhills. My companions were of the very choicest: Mr and Mrs Carr, who were also snatching a breathing-space before betaking themselves to their new appointment, Sheffield. We passed through Tennysonian scenery. But at one point a glorious architectural phenomenon arose upon the vision—the mighty pile of Lincoln Minster, etherealized by some twenty miles of aerial perspective, which gave it an unearthly and almost mythical impressiveness and majesty. I can hold opinion with Dr Johnson that if there were no hereafter to prepare for, there would be no more pleasant way of spending life than in driving through fresh scenery in a chaise, with intelligent and congenial companionship.

Before making my Lincolnshire engagements I had pledged myself to preach "Chapel Sermons" at Lenton, Nottingham. To this I owed two charming days of easy travel, in gig and coach, there being no rail in that region at that time. The approach to Lincoln on the cathedral side of the city was very striking. For the last two miles, the fine, broad, well-kept, beautifully bordered road was perfectly straight, and served as a noble avenue to the cathedral, which, for that distance, seemed to exactly fill the space at the head of this palatial roadway. The effect was grand. To me the most attractive point in the route from Lincoln to Nottingham was Southwell, partly on account of its association with the early and most tranquil part of Byron's life. Here he wrote his *Hours of Idleness*. But the crowning attraction was the singularity and antiquity of its collegiate church, which was founded in the seventh century by Paulinus, Archbishop of York, and is reckoned the oldest ecclesiastical edifice in the kingdom, with the exception of St Martin's, Canterbury, and, of course, Glastonbury, which hardly comes into the competition. The antique, quaint beauty of "the precincts" is very charming. I have had the opportunity of revisiting it since its most tasteful renovating on its so worthily

becoming a cathedral. Its interior is now one of the most exquisite in England.

In the evening I preached at Torrington. On the Wednesday I preached at Louth, and was the guest of one of our most cultivated Lincolnshire Methodists, Mr John Sharpley, a local preacher of repute. I copy from my journal :—

“We conversed chiefly on theology and theologians—Howe, Baxter, Owen, Pye Smith, Harris, and Channing—for he is a great reader. I expressed my conviction, and sustained it by quotations from the *Eclectic* and other Nonconformist publications of note, that the theology of Dissenters was becoming lax and unsettled, with a marked tendency to a low, rationalizing tone. With the example of the Lutheran and the Genevan churches before us, it becomes us to be on our guard against and to look with jealousy upon any loose style of theological criticism.”

During this Lincolnshire visit I made my first essay at outdoor preaching. The circumstances were rather trying. It was Ludford fair, and the good Methodists deemed it prudent to preoccupy our people's minds by interesting religious services. So they persuaded me to take my stand in the midst of the crowd, and conduct a service and preach a sermon. I chose as my text the Parables of the Pearl of Great Price and the Treasure hid in the Field. Afterwards we had a delightful tea meeting in true Lincolnshire style, with vast profusion of the viands.

On the 27th my uncle took me a drive of six miles to see one of his customers, who is a human curiosity. He was at once a flourishing farmer, a mighty musician, an enthusiastic mathematician, and a fanatical student of judicial astrology. He is intent on testing “the Babylonian numbers.” The county of Sir Isaac Newton is especially prolific in mathematical genius. I spent an evening with farmer Exley, brother of the Methodist mathematician of that name. He said it was lucky that his brother could get a living somehow, for he never could be taught so much of farming as to load a cart. The necessity which Wesley felt of denying himself of his mathematical proclivities is well known.

I had the privilege of closely inspecting another of my uncle's customers—the celebrated scholar, Church historian, and Regius Professor of Divinity, Dr Kaye, Bishop of Lincoln. He had taken a country seat about a mile from Market

Rasen. I happened to be at the shop door when he and his lady drove up to make some purchases. Both dismounted, but the Bishop stood outside, as if inviting conversation with any one who might be thus inclined. I found him to be a most kindly and accessible prelate.

At Lincoln I went through the cathedral in company with the Roman Catholic architect, Wilson, to whom Dr Jobson and James Smetham were in succession articulated.

I reached Belper on Tuesday, having been obliged to spend a night in Nottingham. My book-companion throughout this holiday was Chalmers *On the Adaptation of the External Nature to the Moral and Intellectual Constitution of Man*. *Mutual Adaptation*, etc., would have been a truer title. I found it remunerative reading, very striking and well-reasoned in parts, and suggestive when not quite satisfying. I find the following notice in my journal: "What a contrast between the style of Chalmers and that of Foster! The one is expansion, the other compression. Foster condenses truth into algebraic signs; Chalmers works out the question at full length."

It will be seen that a Probationer's holiday, at that time, was not all play and no work. During fifteen days I had taken fourteen services. On August 31 I bade my father and sisters farewell, and took train to Birmingham, and thence took coach to Redditch, my new appointment. I recur to my journal:—

"August 31. Received such a shock as I never before sustained. I came to Redditch in the highest spirits. I was pleasing myself with the anticipation of once more conversing with my dearest friend, John Smetham; for I had received a letter but five days before, assuring me that he was rapidly recovering, and was looking forward with delight to the prospect of a renewal of the intercourse of so many years. I burst into the house with a salutation on my tongue; but in a few minutes the doctor came down the stairs, which opened into the room where I was sitting, and told me that he had just breathed his last.

"September 1. The death of my brother or of my sister did not shake me like this. He was 'my bosom friend, dearer than all'; my only confidant, *animæ dimidium meæ*. My mind and sensibilities this day are stunned, and as if held in melancholy trance; I have been able to do little all day but to travel over the awful bereavement of last evening; yet although absorbed in it, I cannot realise it. I never till now felt the meaning of the Scripture word '*astounded*.' We had a solemn and affecting prayer-meeting this evening, which some-

what softened and relieved me. It is well that I have to prepare the Funeral Sermon and memorial notice, as it will compel me to shake off this stony stupor. The painful task has fallen to me of writing to his betrothed, Miss Morley (daughter of Ex-President George Morley), an account of his last days and of the closing scene. Never were two souls more lovingly united."

A few minutes before his death, dear Smetham was asked whether he had any message for me, if he should be gone before I came. He answered with a smile: "Oh! give my love to him, and tell him to be a good lad." Oh, how that message followed me from day to day!

"No other bereavement could have so 'dug about' my heart. We had often talked of death in all moods, speculative, practical, and spiritual. He had a rich reserve of intellectual strength, unknown to any one besides his brother James and me. A community of tastes and of pursuits, together with the consciousness that we understood each other, formed the double bond between our kindred spirits. The shadiest retreats and deep-most sources of his intellectual and imaginative nature were to all else 'a garden enclosed, . . . a spring shut up, a fountain sealed.' I can say from my heart, 'Would God I had died for thee!' and am conscious that had it been offered to me to save his life by the sacrifice of my own, I should not have hesitated for a single moment. How mysterious! his bodily and mental energy were far superior to mine; he clung to life, I held it lightly; he anticipated 'length of days,' and I an early grave."

"*Humanly* speaking," had we exchanged appointments at the Conference of 1841, had he gone to Ilkeston and I to Lambeth, our careers would also have been reversed. The incessant change, the tonic outdoor exercise, and the comparatively unexacting intellectual demands of a country Circuit were, under Providence, my physical salvation; the strain and the excitement of a large and crowded metropolitan chapel, where he had to meet congregations who were accustomed to the ablest Methodist preaching of the time, and to take his turn with two of its most distinguished ministers, were more than he could stand. The Rev. G. T. Perks, no mean judge of preaching, at this time a student at our Theological Institution, Hoxton, told me that he took care never to lose an opportunity of hearing John Smetham preach, regarding him as by far the ablest Probationer he ever heard. As he was obliged to retire from the Ministry through utter failure of health, no obituary of him appears in the "Minutes

of Conference"; but James Smetham's first prose publication was a brief Memoir of his brother in the Wesleyan Methodist Magazine. James always acknowledged his eldest brother, some five years his senior, to have been the most potent factor in the formation of his own mind.

The shock of this unlooked-for stroke had for a time a very grave effect upon my health, bringing back the sleeplessness and the deep depression of spirits from which I had happily recovered. In this state I was strongly drawn to the eighty-eighth Psalm, in the first instance by its closing verse: "Lover and friend hast Thou taken far from me, and mine acquaintance into darkness." I found my greatest solace in versifying this Psalm.

I was greatly surprised and devoutly thankful to find Methodism in Redditch to be, to the full, as healthy and as hearty as any with which I had become acquainted in the North Midlands or in Lincolnshire and Yorkshire.

Every Sunday morning the chapel was filled; every Sunday evening crowded; and at every week-evening service crowded below and comfortably filled above, whichever of the three ministers might occupy the pulpit. The week-evening prayer-meetings, held in the large vestry, where the quarterly meetings assembled, were invariably crowded to the very door. Not that every Redditch Methodist was perfect, or was regarded as such by himself or by the rest, but each was persuaded of himself and of his brethren, "the root of the matter is in him"; and there was a consciousness of mutual belonging which was charming to behold. The truth is, the blessed impetus was yet unspent of the great Revival at Redditch in 1826. This revival is well described in Coley's *Life of Collins*, in exact accordance with the local accounts of it heard by me some twelve years later. Thomas Collins was one of the many fruits of a Revival brought to pass through God's blessing on the faithful and indomitable labours of a single-handed minister, the Rev. W. Davies. I remember him well in his later ministry as a grave, active, energetic, kindly, winning minister of Christ.

Their hospitality to their ministers was unbounded, one might almost say exacting. The most inconvenient usage for the preachers was that the great banquet of the week was the needle-maker's Saturday night. In this case, if the tables rather shook than groaned under the weight of viands, the

guests themselves would have groaned, but for the fact that the crowning dish for the last night of the week was almost invariably the most digestible of luxuries. On Saturday nights the main street resounded with the bell-like invitation, "Tripe an' eels all 'ot," and the air was redolent with savoury steam. The wholesome popular dainty was so exquisitely cooked that, as James Smetham said, "It required no great grace to be content with our *all'otted* portion."

The most prominent figure in the Society, both physically and officially, was my future father-in-law, Mr John Robinson, architect and builder, the best-known man in that business in the whole country-side. He had just finished the majestic and imposing pile of Studley Castle, which gave a lordly character to a charming landscape. He had contracted for the section of the Birmingham and Gloucester Railway which was nearest to Redditch, and its massive, well-knit bridges were monumental of the solidity of his workmanship. No man in the neighbourhood was so familiar with its picturesque church architecture, and with the ins and outs of its thick-strewn mansions. He had built Tardebigge church so much to the satisfaction of the aristocratic old Vicar, Lord Aston, as to win his deep respect. I have myself been a visitant at the vicarage along with Mr Robinson, and could not but be struck with the marked consideration and the warm regard with which he treated the well-known Methodist local preacher. The first time Mr Robinson took me in his four-wheeler to Birmingham, as we passed King's Norton church, I broke out in admiration of its lofty, graceful spire, which had not long since been renewed. He replied with quiet satisfaction, "I'm glad you like it, for I built that spire; and as no one of my workmen could trust his head to fix on the weathercock, without a lumbering cradle, on the most delicate and tapering point, I had to climb up by outside ladders and fix the burnished bird myself." Mr Robinson was also class-leader and circuit-steward. He formed a noble, patriarchal figure, as he stood to address a Society meeting or a Circuit gathering—by reason of his stature, his breadth of bust and shoulder, his massive head, his well-moulded features, and his roseate complexion. He was a native of the ancient town of Aldborough in the extreme north of Yorkshire, close to the Durham border. His parents were devoted Methodists, who, by the space of more than fifty years, "took

in the preachers," first in the enormous Middleham Circuit, and then, on its division, in the Richmond Circuit. They belonged to the hardy breed of Dalesmen whence sprang Wycliffe. All the Richmond "preachers" whom I ever knew have been profuse in their praise of Mr Robinson's mother, especially the young men; for she was the mother of them all, most of all George Smith, the brother of Dr Gervase, who rejoiced to spend three years of his probation in the Circuit, under her maternal wing, and my old colleague, Samuel Lord, who was never weary of dilating on her graces. I visited her in the ancestral cottage in her ninety-fourth year, when the wild-pink richly bloomed on her clear, unwrinkled cheeks, and the blended lustre of the rising and the setting sun lit up a face where saintliness and sweetness kissed each other.

Her eldest son, seeing that a remote, secluded spot, with about eight hundred inhabitants, gave no sufficient scope for his energies and business talents, early in the century found his way to London, with an introduction to a large building firm from the Duke of Northumberland, on whose estate at Stanwick his father was bailiff. To this firm the young Methodist soon became right trusty and well-beloved, and about the year 1814 they sent him down to Worcestershire to the building or rebuilding of Hewell Hall, the seat of the Earl of Plymouth.

A devout young Churchwoman, Miss Hill, of Leicester, visited her relatives, the family with whom he lodged, and accepted his proposals. She had been converted under the ministry of the Rev. Thomas Robinson, Vicar of St Mary's, Leicester, the long-famous author of *Scripture Characters*, one of the most popular productions of the age, and she had already been a regular communicant at his church. The first course of her religious experience was based upon that book, and on the preaching of its author; and it formed an admirable substructure to the methodical, quiet, thoughtful Methodism which was built upon it. It was no small privilege for a young disciple to be brought under the assiduous and tender shepherding of such a man as Robinson. The traces of the teaching of Robinson of Leicester were visible in my worthy mother-in-law to the end of life, in absolute simplicity, in heartiest hospitality, especially to ministers of Christ, in a sedate cheerfulness, and in the control of a naturally fiery temperament. Yet she was as out-and-out a class-meeting Methodist as any in the place.

Mr Robinson's few years in London had a notable effect upon his mental and his Methodist history. He listened to the powerful preaching, and received, from quarter to quarter, the fatherly advices of some of the most memorable men whom Methodism ever reared, such as Henry Moore and Samuel Bradburn.

A great educative power in his own youth had been the conversation of the preachers in their stated visits to his parents' house. So he resolved to secure this advantage for his own household. One of their first guests was amongst the most memorable, Gideon Ouseley, during the special services which he held in Redditch in 1818, when little "Tommy Collins" experienced his first or initiatory conversion. To their dying day they loved to recall the sayings and doings of the hero of Irish evangelism.

Encouraged by the successes of his brother, a younger scion of the house "journeyed toward the south." He settled at Wolverhampton, and was able to retire from business in middle life, and purchased the mansion and estate of Rowington, in that lovely arboretum which lies between Birmingham and Warwick. He died there in a good old age. His son George and his son's daughters have become distinguished in the literary world. On the breaking out of the Franco-German war George Robinson threw himself into Metz as war correspondent of the *Daily News*, and continued there during the whole of its disastrous siege. The result was his two goodly and extremely interesting volumes on the subject. His two daughters, Agnes Mary and Mabel Robinson (Madame Darmesteter), have achieved wide and deserved popularity as story-wrights, poets, and contributors to the leading magazines and reviews.

Mr Robinson's sister was married to the Rev. Hilton Cheesbrough, a famous missionary in his day. He spent the whole half-century of his ministerial life abroad.

With this interesting, energetic family, I became connected by marrying the eldest daughter of Mr Robinson, of Redditch.

While at a boarding-school at Bristol she attended Portland Chapel, where she heard our ablest men; but she was chiefly indebted for religious decision to a clergyman, the Rev. W. B. Mackenzie, whose Young Ladies' Bible-class she was permitted to attend, nothing of the kind being then available in Bristol

Methodism. On our marriage and appointment to the London (Great Queen Street) Circuit, we found Mackenzie the Incumbent of St James', Holloway, and my dear wife re-introduced herself and introduced me to that devoted minister of Christ, the worthy predecessor of Dr (now Bishop) Boyd Carpenter. As we resided at Kentish Town, we as often as practicable indulged ourselves in the luxury of hearing Mackenzie's week-night sermons. His power consisted in intense and grappling earnestness, and his helpful insight into the perplexities of religious experience.

My wife's only sister married the Rev. Samuel Taylor, a well known and highly esteemed minister, but she died in their second Circuit. Her brother George married a lady widely known in Methodism, Miss Baldwin of Stourport, granddaughter of President Jacob Stanley, and sister of Mr Alfred Baldwin, M.P. George Robinson was well known in connexion with our Humberstone Road Chapel, Leicester, but was cut down in middle life. Although the last years of Mr Robinson, senior, were beclouded by serious business solicitudes, attributable to disablement through an accident, his Christian integrity was heroic, and his end most blessed.

We had in our Societies and congregations several thriving manufacturers of needles and of fish-hooks. Of these my own associations were, of course, the closest with the worthy gentleman and lady with whom I lodged. They were very intelligent and delightfully companionable, and their ministerial commissariat took not the slightest note of the closely calculated "allowances" of a Methodist probationer. Miss Adams, Mrs Lewis' daughter by a former marriage, was an admirable character. The family set no limit to their indulgence of the freaks and fantasies of an imaginative youth, and mine hostess "coddled" me as if she were my mother. Next to these came the Averys, of Headless Cross, the parents of our present generous and devoted friend of that fruitful hill of Zion. His house was the paradise of preachers. We were always welcomed with enthusiasm, and could unbend without reserve; and their son, though hardly yet *in* his teens, gave proof already of a musical faculty akin to genius; and when ruffled or depressed the itinerant prophet had only to say, "Bring me the minstrel," and he would discourse sweet music to us by the

hour. Both parents had the urbanity, the cheerfulness, and trustiness which now so well become their son.

Our second place was Studley. It was pleasant to visit this kind-hearted, preacher-loving people, though it involved us in late hours. The service usually began at half-past eight, and we had sometimes to meet a class for "tickets," with some thirty members present; and the nearest Road to Red-ditch was proverbially "*unked*." *Unked* is one of the very few dictionary words which are peculiar to a comparatively small tract of country. Walker has an *article* upon it, but does not seem to me to have just hit the popular meaning of the word. *Weird* is its nearest synonym. It is *drier* than the north-country *drie*, and is suggestive of "dangers both *ghostly* and *bodily*." Part of it was expressively called "the Hollow-way," and might have been expressly hollowed out and overshadowed with old trees to serve as the meeting-place of Christian with Apollyon. A singing lot of Methodists, all yarn-spinners in a small way, would exorcise half the distance in a charming fashion.

Our third place was the fair old town of Alcester, where lived the second preacher, Frederick F. Woolley. He was a splendid colleague. He had just been ordained, and had married Miss Davies, of Hill Top, Wednesbury, sister of the late Mr Thomas Davies. Woolley's face gave the impression of a refined intellectuality; and the contents of the compact diamond-edition of a man fully met the expectations raised by the frontispiece. Mrs Woolley, fresh from the cozy, model-Methodist homestead that looked down on the wondrous stretch of country which is by *night* the antithesis of "Black," was worthy alike of her father and her husband. I generally stayed, by special grace, on my Alcester Sundays, with my genial and congenial colleague. I thus acquired one of the most valued friendships of my life, that of the present Mrs Walford Green [now widow of the late Rev. Dr Green, President of the Conference in 1894], the niece of Mrs Woolley, at that time a "seedling gem" of the "noble stem" of Davies.

Woolley had a little property besides his slim allowances, and, of course, spent it on books. This was a grand thing for me; for besides buying many of my old books when I had read them—as I see now—from purely fraternal and eleemosynary considerations, at an exorbitant second-hand price, he made me

free of his own bookshelves, which bore the choicest theological literature of the time.

A leading tradesman of the town, a member of the Established Church, was so affected by the moral and spiritual condition of Alcester, that he contributed £50 a year to the support of the Wesleyan Methodist minister, the clergy of the place being altogether unequal to the necessities of the case.

At Headless Cross our congregation was not large, but our prosperous Sunday school was very popular, and a great blessing to the place. It was under the indefatigable superintendence of Mr Yoxall, of Redditch, father of the present M.P. for West Nottingham.

We had a lovely little society at the sweet little village of Beoley, where we were entertained by the relatives of the Rev. George Terry, who was then a little boy.

At Rowney Green we had the most tumble-down chapel I ever preached in or ever saw, but "the preachers" were physically "well looked after" by a stout old character named Quiney. We had a lively little "cause" at *the Portway*, so called from its position on one of the great Roman roads.

At Redditch, as at Ilkeston, I started a Bible-class for young men, but did not succeed much better in the one place than in the other. The fault was my fixing the course of study at too high a level. I supplied my youths with books, but I found the race of Redditch Methodists, for the most part, as much inferior to their Derbyshire brethren in the love of reading as they surpassed them in natural *acuteness*—the brightness and sharpness of the needle, for the manufacture of which they were so famed throughout the world.

In spring, 1843, Dr Newton opened our urgently needed new chapel, the capacity of which much exceeded that of the old one, as did also that of minister's house, the vestries, and the class-rooms. To me the honour fell of preaching the last sermon in the old chapel and the first sermon in the new one after the opening services. On the former occasion I dwelt wholly on the hallowed and affecting associations of the place, on "the long line" of faithful preachers who had there "spoken to them the word of God," on the epoch-making significance of the advance. On the latter I dwelt on the characteristics of true Christian worship from the text: "Then will I go unto the altar of God, unto God my exceeding joy: yea, upon the

harp will I praise Thee, O God my God." Although so much larger than the former one, our chapel was filled from the very first. We needed not, like the Puritans of New England, to settle by church-meeting the occupancy of the pews, as indicating the gradations of Church consideration; the whole affair was arranged as if instinctively. When I looked down from the pulpit and saw the families seated in the successive rows of pews, it seemed as if the very spirit of seemliness had *bedded out* those comely groups, "the planting of the Lord, that He may be glorified."

Next to the building and opening of our new chapel, and in some respects far more noteworthy than even that, the most remarkable event of my year at Redditch was that to which Mr Coley makes allusion in his *Life of Collins*. On the third of August, 1843, a thunderstorm, such as I have never elsewhere witnessed, heard, or read of, either in prose or poetry, except in the description of the seventh plague of Egypt in the ninth chapter of the Book of Exodus, broke upon and brooded over the busy little place. Not long after daybreak I was awake by the mutterings and growlings of distant thunder, like the boom of a "random gun which" a "foe was sullenly firing." The tempest gathered slowly, but by seven o'clock when I arose its vanguard was close upon us. As I was dressing I felt a sudden presentiment of extreme and immediate danger, so I knelt by my bedside and committed myself and the other inmates of the house to the tender and almighty care of our heavenly Father. As I was in the act of rising, there came upon us a tremendous crash, and the house seemed all aflame. It was evidently struck by some terrific fire-ball, but the fact that I could see the lightning and could hear the thunder-peal was proof enough that I was yet unscathed. I hurried downstairs to see what had become of the rest, and made my way to the nursery, which was on the ground-floor. This was full of dust; but I found the nursemaid sitting on the hearthrug, with the little boy, some three years old, clinging to her. They were both black with dust and soot, but not a hair of their heads was harmed. She told me that a great ball of fire had fallen through the roof upon the hearthrug, close to her very feet, but had instantly bounded off to the left and crashed through the wall into the garden. There indeed was the aperture in the roof, and there the opening in the wall; but the mighty mass had cut its way, "as clean as a whistle,"

so that the *débris* was incredibly small. In a few minutes Mrs Lewis rushed into the room to learn the fate of her only son. When she found the three of us unhurt, she lifted her eyes and hands to heaven and exclaimed, "It is of the Lord's mercy that we are not consumed!" We knelt in thanksgiving and in prayer, and still confided ourselves to the mercy which had so conspicuously protected us.

On examining the track which this terrible projectile had pursued, and the traces it had left of its resistless course, one could not but be struck with the *cleanness* with which it had done its work, and the restraint with which it had fulfilled its mission. An angelic messenger could hardly have performed his errand with greater neatness and precision, combined with instantaneous and irresistible effect. The dimensions of the electric bolt could be exactly taken by measuring the orifices it had made, as, it is said, a cannon-ball fills up the hole it makes in an iron ship so closely that scarce a thread could intervene. In the millionth of a moment which it had taken for its task it had sent off lines of force along the bell-wires, which peeled off the lath and plaster, and *planed* the brickwork till it was as smooth to the fingers as a board when a skilled carpenter has done his work. Yet such was the force with which it moved that it carried off the handle of the door-bell, along with a large portion of the door-case, right across our front garden into the middle of the road.

Such was the fury and persistence of the storm that it was full three hours before any of our neighbours ventured out of their own homes to see whether we were alive or dead. Our nearest neighbour's house abutted on our back garden, and commanded a full view of ours from that side. The lady of the house was peering out of her window on the lurid sky, when she saw what she described as "a great ball of fire" strike straight into the roof of our dwelling, and seemingly envelop it in flame. She rushed into the room where her daughters were, and cried, "They're all killed at Mr Lewis's," and then fell down under a stroke of paralysis. They had enough to do to attend to their unconscious mother.

Meanwhile, the phenomena of the storm as witnessed from my study window were fearfully magnificent. The clouds hung down in almost columnar masses, and seemed to sway impatiently, as if so overcharged that they were feeling for a

conductor. The lightning was both forked and serpentine. The forked seemed like the crossing of zigzagged bayonets of flame in aerial warfare, as if "Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels" (Rev. xii. 7). The serpentine lightning was still more awful, because more *imminent* and threatening. It not only let itself down to earth in snake-like coils, as an eager, fiery serpent, as I have seen it gloriously elsewhere at other times, but having reached the earth "*the fire ran along upon the ground*" (Exod. ix. 23).

No doubt our house owed the unwished for distinction of being the first building struck by the lightning to the fact of its "holding the height of the hill," and being, with its adjoining factory, the first tall and tempting structure the tempest would encounter for many a mile. A vast plain stretches from Redditch to Edge Hill in Oxfordshire, which historic eminence was a very striking object from our own back-door. This loftiness of situation, of course, gave us all the wider landscape and skyline for observing, so to speak, the tactics of the tempest.

But it was within our own domicile that this stupendous agent left the most impressive tokens of its wondrously restricted strength, as that of a loyally obsequious, though gigantic errand-bearer of a benign and mighty Sovereign. One of the most striking evidences which it left behind was this. Close by the outlet by which it crashed through the wall into the garden stood a table with an oil-cloth covering. We found that this oil-cloth covering was perforated with holes of the tiniest conceivable dimensions, as if it had been elaborately punctured with the finest-pointed needles. This was the work of the rebounding dust of plaster, brick and mortar, into which the masonry had been crushed by the electric ball. It is well known that diamonds are cut by diamond-dust brought to bear upon them with enormous impact.

"Though the mills of God grind slowly,
Yet they grind exceeding small."

And, if the *bolts* of God *grind swiftly*, they *grind exceeding small*. In the millionth of a moment this electric shot had pulverised a mass of masonry of its own dimensions into all but impalpability, and had yet lent to those imponderable

particles a portion of its own resistless energy. One could but think of that resplendent "Stone which the builders rejected," Who said of Himself, "Upon whomsoever it shall fall, it shall *grind him to powder*."

After three hours' raging, there came a kind of lull or armistice in aerial conflict; and our neighbours ventured on some little expeditions to ascertain our fate. It is noteworthy that the first was led by the "Correspondent" of a Birmingham newspaper, who thus showed the prowess of his brethren on the battlefield; for assuredly he was "*under fire*." Knowing him as an intelligent and scientific gentleman, I gladly accompanied him in his inspection of the lightning's track. But I never dreamed that the bared bell-wires were still surcharged with electricity. In the eagerness of my improvised lecture, I touched a wire, and instantly there flashed out a long spark such as issues from a well-constructed electrifying machine, and drove back my arm with such violence that the "Correspondent" on the one side and mine hostess on the other instinctively caught hold of me, to prevent my falling.

A little episode occurred just at the moment when the house was struck, which has never faded from my memory. Instinctively glancing at the outside scene I saw a girl in the middle of the road, some twelve or thirteen years of age, holding fast an old umbrella bigger than herself. I feared for the moment she was slightly struck, for she staggered visibly. But, no; she was only blinded for the instant "by the glory of that light." She was dazed, not daunted; she grasped with both hands her faded gingham, as a standard-bearer reeling under a blow might cling to his swaying banner, and neither turned nor looked to the right hand or the left, but held on her way as if she had experienced nothing more alarming than a passing gust of wind. The little homespun heroine had, doubtless, undertaken overnight some more or less important errand, and the thought of turning back, or swerving to the one side or the other, never crossed her gallant little mind. And the unleashed elements did homage to her duty-doing childish *nonchalance*, and let her pass unharmed; for they are duteous too.

Amongst the most noteworthy characteristics of the tempest were its magnetic phenomena. At this time Faraday was pursuing the series of experiments which resulted in his magnificent

discoveries and his ultimate "identification of electricities," but the affinity between magnetism and electricity was only beginning to be recognised in popular science. My host was a needle manufacturer, and the factory adjoined the house. On the previous day a large order had been received, and some thousands of needles packed but not sent off. Experience of the effect of much less violent thunderstorms upon the polish of the needles induced re-examination of the consignment. The parcel was opened in my presence, and the needles found to be so discoloured as to be quite unsaleable. We spread out a large number of them and passed a knife over them; and they all bristled up like steel filings under a magnet. This occurred some hours after the house was struck, yet the magnetization of the steel on the premises was still intense.

This thunderstorm claims record in the history of Methodism in Redditch. I recur to Mr Coley's allusion to it in his *Life of Thomas Collins*:—

"The Methodists sent the bellman round to summon the people to prayer. Many who, terror-stricken in that tremendous storm, had thought that surely nature's final hour was come, obeyed the invitation. Several were brought to God; among the rest, J. M., the head of a set of poachers. He had carried with him in his pocket to the prayer meeting an order from a Birmingham dealer for £5 worth of game. After the experience of that hour, filching in the woods was no work for him. When his 'pals' came up to put themselves, as usual, under his guidance, he told them that he was 'Christ's man now,' and would poach no more. Bereaved of their captain, they lost heart, and the gang broke up. Wild ways had reduced the prodigal to straits. Before Sunday, knowing the penury of his wardrobe, some friends sent the new convert a tolerable chapel-going suit. He wore it in the morning service, but sent it back in the afternoon, and appeared in his own at night. The sturdy Englishman preferred seeming poor to being an almsman. . . . Mr Collins says, 'I found him prospering for both worlds.'"

Mr Collins greatly enjoyed his two visits to his old friends during this revival. No wonder that the most stout-hearted quailed beneath this awe-inspiring visitation, even as Pharaoh in a like manifestation of the Almighty's power. For some ten hours the tempest raged. The church and the Roman Catholic chapel—a towered structure, were both struck; yet, strange to say, no one was hurt, unless we except the paralytic seizure of our neighbour on witnessing the descent of the fire-ball on

our house. For hours after the stress of the storm was over the lightning was incessant ; but now sheet lightning, not forked nor serpentine, but reminding one of Watts' vivid lines :—

“And the red lightnings wave along
The banners of Thy host.”

When the people crowded to the prayer-meeting, at half-past seven, the aspect of the sky was terrible : it was lurid, angry, menacing to an intense degree. It seemed, “with tristful visage, as against the Doom,” to be “thought-sick at the” scene. I have witnessed many a glorious thunderstorm, when one's heart said, “The God of glory thundereth”—one in the Lake District, watched from an elevation in the night, surpassing Wordsworth's fine description ; I have witnessed a typical midsummer thunderstorm amidst the High Alps : but never have I seen anything to approach in awe-inspiring grandeur that tempest at Redditch. Twelve years later, in reading Ruskin's *Stones of Venice*, I could not but recall that tempest, when I came upon the passage : “Nothing appears to me more remarkable than the array of scenic magnificence by which the imagination is appalled, . . . so that the utmost possible impression of awe shall be produced upon the minds of all, though direct suffering is inflicted upon few. Consider, for instance, the moral effect of a single thunderstorm ; . . . how strangely are the expressions of the threatening elements fitted to the apprehensions of the human soul !”

But, after the tempest, a “still small voice” : “God hath spoken once ; twice have I heard this ; that power belongeth unto God. Also unto Thee, O Lord, belongeth mercy.” We had been praying and labouring, longing and looking for a revival through the months, and now it had come in an unexpected way. We could but muse upon the text : “By terrible things in righteousness wilt Thou answer us, O God of our salvation.” It was hard to leave a Revival so auspicious, and yet 'twas comforting to hear “the voice of joy and rejoicing in the tabernacles of the righteous,” because “the right hand of the Lord was doing valiantly.”

The other Nonconformist Churches in Redditch were not strong. The Primitives had a small chapel and a lively, active, humble-minded, and hard-working little Society. The Independent Chapel had a good frontage in a leading thoroughfare

and a most admirable pastor, greatly esteemed and revered as an honour to the place, though he was one of the most retiring and unpolemical of men. My hostess was a great admirer of his character, and lost no time in inviting him to meet me. I found him one of the many choice spirits whom I have known amongst my Congregationalist brethren. As his daily "constitutional" led him past my study window, and as his movements were as regular as clockwork, I joined him as often as I could, and spent many an hour with him in his study chatting about books. With a poor stipend he managed to combine a rich library, consisting mainly of the very *pick* of English theology and homiletics, both Puritan and Anglican. During one of my subsequent visits to Redditch, I had the mournful privilege of attending him on his death-bed. He was cut down in the midst of his years and of his strength. But, oh! it was a glorious death! all the more triumphant because so peaceful and so homely. Most characteristically he gave me his experience in the last words of Richard Hooker; and as the distorted and discoloured lips enunciated with such tranquil dignity the stately-stepping and sonorous sentences of the author of *Ecclesiastical Polity*, it seemed to me an exultant pæan on the discomfiture of death. Mr Humphreys was an inveterate sermonizer, and like some of our own ministers contrived to compress into a square letter-sheet of rough, sand-coloured paper an amazing quantity of most nutritious, tasty exposition.

Soon after I reached Redditch I made the acquaintance of the only Unitarian Minister with whom I was ever on visiting terms. On returning from my first visit to Alcester, by coach to Mappleborough Green, I found my nearest travelling companion to be a very conversible, communicative gentleman. The conversation turned on Channing's *Works*, with which he was surprised to find me so familiar; and when I expressed my enthusiastic admiration of many of his sermons and of all his literary and philanthropic essays, he introduced himself as the Unitarian Minister of Alcester. He resided several miles away from his flock at Moreton Hall, near Inkberrow, and visited his charge but once a week. He invited me to his mansion. I accepted the invitation. I found him to be a country squire and a considerable landowner, who devoted himself to the improve-

ment of his intellect and his estate. He talked freely and eagerly on spiritual and theologic matters in a very transcendental style; but as he was nearly three times my age, I contented myself with suggesting some Scriptural modification or completion of his statements. The visit gave me a peep at a lovely bit of Worcestershire which lay quite outside the territory of Methodism: Inkberrow, Church Lench, Rouse Lench, and Abbot's Lench.

I was completely taken aback by the beauty of the scenery in the neighbourhood of Redditch. All it lacked was water. Our grand view was that from Webheath, about two miles from Redditch. Right in front rose Malvern Hill—separated by but some twelve miles of gentle, undulating landscape—revealing all his mighty individuality, as if assuming suzerainty of the glorious scene. The enormous shadow which he cast when the sun was westering gave a deep impression of his mass. And he had a noble retinue. On the right the continuation of the range; the Clee hills in Shropshire, rising to the height of more than eighteen hundred feet; and the humbler Abberley hills by the Severn; on the left the Bredon and the Broadway hills, which look down upon the vale of Evesham and the course of Shakespeare's Avon. These last make an imposing show when a fine Scotch plaid of sunlit cloud is flung across their shoulders and their breasts. The immense extent of prospect under the finest atmospheric conditions may be gathered from the following fact. One day of surpassing clearness, as Mr Humphreys and myself were feasting on the landscape, he suddenly put his hand upon my arm, and, pointing westward, asked, "Do you see any very striking object on the extreme verge of the horizon?" I answered: "Yes; one of the most beautiful objects I ever looked on in my life. It has the appearance of an enormous sugar-loaf." "Well," he answered, "that *is* 'the Sugar-loaf' at Abergavenny. I was born and grew up to manhood at the foot of that mountain, and to me it is one of the most familiar objects in creation. I have taken this same round we are now taking almost every pleasant week-day of my life for more than twenty years, and this is but the second time I ever saw it from this point, which must be seventy miles away."

Whilst in the Redditch Circuit I had the only public encounter with a Mormon I ever had or ever wished to have.

At that time, 1843, the Mormons were a comparatively feeble folk, only numbering some 15,000 souls, and had pushed no farther West than Illinois, where, however, they had an organized settlement, *Nauvoo*, and they had begun to send missionaries to England to make converts and induce emigration. Polygamy was as yet an esoteric doctrine, but was effectively used as a means of domiciliary proselytism. The chief game, just then, were capable farmers, with a little capital and a few good-looking and unmarried daughters. An apostle of this new fanaticism had made his headquarters at Studley, and had been incredibly successful. His chief haul had been the entire family of a highly respected Nonconformist (but not Methodist) yeoman, who had already advertised his property for sale. His daughters were a bevy of as fair damsels as one might meet with in a day's march. I was earnestly entreated to confront this man, which no one had yet attempted. So, at the close of my third service, though tired with work and walking, and with some miles more before me, I went out to meet this wild man from the West. He was a perilous antagonist to look at, if the contest had been one of thews and sinews. He was a huge, hirsute backwoodsman, the perfect type of a hard, determined, dare-devil zealot and adventurer: an individual with whom one would not like to find oneself alone in a desert place. However, I closed with him as the promulgator of a new religion. But when hopelessly floored in argument, he resorted to the defensive tactics of the polecat, by emitting such a pestiferous effluvium of obscenities, though the audience consisted to a large extent of reputable females, that I was forced to leave him in possession of the field.

My first invitation to preach out of my own Circuit fulfilled one of the day-dreams of my childhood: it was to Stratford-upon-Avon. Happily for me, there was neither rail nor coach between Redditch and Stratford, so I enjoyed a long, delightful drive the latter part of the way through Shakespeare's haunts. I stayed with Mr Joseph Turner, a good-humoured, tale-telling, jocose, and sociable giant, who had introduced the needle trade to Stratford. He and his grave, sweet, matronly wife had given a strong *spurt* to the Methodism of Shakespeare's birth and burial place. We had a lively meeting in our neat little chapel, attended by a most amiable and interesting Congregationalist minister, who supped with us and chatted charmingly

far into the night—Mr Ailmore—a great friend of Isaac Taylor, Jane Taylor, and Ann Taylor. He had been their neighbour and fellow-worshipper in Essex, and was replete with details with regard to that extraordinary family.

The morning after the meeting was, of course, devoted to the inspection of the Shakespeariana, with Washington Irving and William Howitt as my guides. Two changes, however, had taken place since the visit of the American classic—one most pleasant, the other the reverse. The vast and fair, though hoary and stately pile—the place of the great poet's baptism and burial—with its symmetrical and "star-y-pointed" spire, had just before been tenderly and duteously restored; but the gray-haired sexton whom Washington Irving paints had given place to a smartly dressed verger, whose pretentious loquacity grated harshly on one's sensibilities. I should have preferred to visit it at eventide, and by myself; but the mellow, rich, poetic light of autumn and the wavy shadows of the elms subdued the glare of "garish day," and the majestic avenue of limes, with boughs so exquisitely intertwined as to form a noble outside aisle, conducting from the gateway to the porch, with the gorgeous solemnity of their fading foliage, shed a pensive influence upon the mind not uncongenial with the spirit of the scene. And the "soft-flowing Avon," with its marvellous mediæval bridge, the enormous length of which seems suggestive of wide weltering floods, and the quaint, antique aspect of great part of the world-famous town, and its well-timbered and emphatically English environment, make it not unworthy of its imperishable associations, and establish an agreement between scenery and sentiment.

I confess, however, that my next invitation to preach in a Circuit which I had not before seen was still more welcome and more profoundly enjoyed. This was to John and Mary Fletcher's Madeley. I was entertained at the most hospitable home of Hesba Stretton's uncle, Mr Edward Smith, of Park Lane, Madeley. I recur to my Journal:—

"*Friday, March 31, 1843.*—Left Redditch by coach at 9 A.M. Richard Merry, a warm-hearted and impetuous local preacher, who although distressingly, and one would have thought depressingly, afflicted, yet seemed always in the happiest mood, was my companion to Birmingham. Himself too calmly happy to be *merry*, was the exhaustless source of merriment to others, by reason of his good-natured egotism and his

oracular aphorisms, jerked out in the most grotesque and pantomimic style. I had my first view of the black and blazing region of Wednesbury, Bilston, etc., so powerfully described by Bulwer. From Wolverhampton to Madeley read Foster's *Essays*. A very cordial reception by Mr and Mrs Smith, who are intimate with some of our greatest men, such as Lessey. She is the daughter of a once well-known minister, Lancelot Harrison. Saturday morning and afternoon being dreary, wet and impracticable, read Tom Moore's voluptuous and over-heated *Epicurean* for the entertainment of the ladies, with music and conversation. In the evening, with 'clear shining after rain,' made my longed for pilgrimage to Fletcher's tomb—with emotions differing widely from those with which I had gazed upon the grave of Shakespeare. In Madeley churchyard I felt conscience-stricken and humbled to the dust. There is no character which so realizes my ideal of *sainthood* as that of Fletcher, or for which I cultivate a reverence so profound. What a contrast to the chief saints of the Patristic period! The high and hallowed communings, the vehement, availing intercessions of Fletcher's closet, his wasting yet unwearied labours amidst the colliers, his uncouth parishioners, the intense yet often 'lambent' playful flame of his defensive zeal for the truth of God, the angelic loftiness yet lowliness of his devoted life—seem worthier of prominence in the history of the Church of Christ than the elaborated errors and the hierarchical encroachments which deface the annals of so many of the most illustrious 'Church men.' There is, indeed, a broad, though overlooked, distinction between 'Ecclesiastical History' and the History of the Church of Christ. The latter is, as yet, unwritten, save 'in the Lamb's Book of Life,' and in scattered episodes and miscellaneous memoirs. I felt guilty in approaching Fletcher's tomb without having prepared for the solemnity by meditation and prayer. A pilgrimage to the grave of a genuine *Scriptural* saint, as a means of grace, is not without countenance from reason, nature, and experience; but to ordain it as a *penance*, or to make the sepulchre a *shrine*, is most preposterous. Next to the Holy Land I have longed to visit Madeley more than any other spot on earth. I ought to have spent the rest of the day in retirement, meditation and prayer."

This was precluded by what was, however, the next best thing—a delightful talk with the youngest of our Madeley ministers, Rev. J. E. Moulton, father of the late Rev. W. F. Moulton, D.D. I recur to my Journal:—

"Sunday, April 2.—Preached the 'Chapel Sermons' at Madeley Wood. My old school-fellow, Richard Smetham, came in to supper, bringing with him Mr Baylis, his great literary and intellectual chum. Conversation naturally turned on Fletcher and the *Checks*. Baylis is a devotee of Jonathan Edwards and of Philosophical Necessity, in the iron mechanism of which his mind seems forced to move. He is hard to understand, and harder still to be convinced. Logic, stoutly stapled

in assumed and arbitrary premisses, and concatenated closely, seems with him to dominate the universe and its Creator. Yet he is both courteous and deferential. Being the great topographer of the neighbourhood, he kindly placed himself at my service. In his way he is both a genius and a character—cold, yet enterprising, sociable, yet not formed for friendship, he accomplishes whatever he undertakes, and has raised himself from indigence to competence and consideration by sheer force of intellect, and yet found time to indulge his passion for metaphysics and polite literature.

"*April 3.—Mondayish.* Tried to read Tom Moore again to the ladies, but was *stalled* by his luscious style. Delectable walk in Coalbrookdale with Baylis and Dick Smetham. No one can form a just idea of John Fletcher's labours who does not know the steepness of the hills within his beat. Fine view of the Severn, Buildwas Abbey, Shrewsbury spire, and the mountains of Merionethshire. Conversation on *Martin Chuzzlewit*. On the way back talked too much about myself and my juvenile peculiarities, till we turned to German criticism.

"*April 5.*—Spent the morning again most delightfully in the delicious Coalbrookdale, which struck me as the loveliest spot I had yet looked on outside Derbyshire. Spent the afternoon at the house of Miss Tooth, Mrs Fletcher's companion-friend, who seemed proud to show me all the Fletcheriana: the lanthorn which he used in his night-visits to the sick, a curious piece of Continental mechanism, etc. Took tea and supper and spent the evening at the Vicarage, by invitation of the Vicar, to meet his venerable father, the Vicar of Yardley, near Birmingham. Mr Gwyther, senr., was originally a Wesleyan Methodist, and is still in creed, conviction, sentiment and spirit. His lady, who was with him, is a most comely, kindly matron of great wealth and greater expectations. Mr Gwyther, senr., was cordial, communicative, and spiritual to a delightful degree. He enthusiastically escorted me to the room which Wesley used to occupy, the room in which Fletcher died, and the closet of his secret devotion, the paper of the wall against which he knelt being stained with the breath of prayer. The topics of our talk were, of course, first of all, Fletcher and Methodism, then Puseyism and the Scotch Kirk question. Gwyther, junr., left all the talking to his father, who was quite equal to all demands upon him. The old gentleman and his lady gave me a most hearty invitation to visit them at Yardley."

The next place of interest in the district at which I preached during the year was the venerable yet spacious chapel at Hill Top, Wednesbury. I have already stated that here I became acquainted with the Davis family, by whom I was most cordially entertained. Even then the name of Davis seemed part of the very definition of Hill Top Methodism.

I also spent a very pleasant Sunday at Bidford, the most lively, thriving "cause" in the Evesham Circuit, Shakespeare's "drunken Bidford," where I preached some anniversary sermons with much enjoyment. A sweet surprise awaited me at Shakespeare's "hungry Grafton," where I supped and slept. My host and hostess had a large boarding-school, and both were bred and born in Yorkshire, and great admirers of my father's preaching, and both from old Circuits of his. The lady had been so intimate with the family that her maiden name, Betsey Todd, was a household word, and the gentleman had sprung from my father's last Circuit, Patrington. For my parents' sake I was entertained enthusiastically. My host was intelligent, cultivated, energetic, self-reliant, as the head of an educational establishment is bound to be.

Amongst the Methodist laymen of the district with whom I made acquaintance, Mr Cox, father of the three ministers, John G., Josiah, and Stephen, was one of the most notable in every way: noble looking, an effective speaker, an indefatigable worker, and a generous giver.

During the year I had the opportunity of visiting or re-visiting in the service of the Connexion several places of interest outside the district:—

"On Christmas Day, 1842, I had the great joy of once more preaching to my dear old friends at Ilkeston. I felt it a touching token of regard and kindness to have been invited to revisit them within two months of leaving them, and that they should put off the anniversary two months until my Superintendent thought I might be spared a few days from my new Circuit. I much enjoyed the services. My friends gathered round me with enthusiastic loyalty. This invitation gave me the opportunity of spending a few days with my venerated father. On my return journey spent the night at Birmingham with my friend Dr Edward Smith (Gervase's brother.) He is very able, though a practical phrenologist, who gives lectures, and tells fortunes.

"*January, 1843.*—My old patron, Charles Welch, of Hull, has spent part of his Christmas holidays in our neighbourhood, of which he is a native. I passed a splendid evening with him. Though in the pulpit and at a town missionary meeting he is one of the most solemn and earnest of our local preachers, yet in society and on a village platform he is the nearest realization of Shakespeare's picture of a sterling wit I ever met with or imagined:—

‘A merrier man
Within the limit of becoming mirth,
I never spent an hour's talk withal.

His eye begets occasion for his wit ;
 For every object that his eye doth catch
 The other turns to a mirth-moving jest,
 Which his fair tongue, conceit's expositor,
 Delivers in such apt and gracious words,
 That aged ears play truant at his tales.'"

On Good Friday and Easter Sunday, 1843, I had again the privilege of speaking and preaching at Bradford and at Bingley ; this time for the Foreign Missions. This gave me the opportunity of attending at Eastbrook Chapel the finest Saturday evening band-meeting, both numerically and spiritually, at which I was ever present. The large room was filled, and the speaking most enlivening and edifying by reason of its simplicity, earnestness, naturalness, and cheeriness. The other speakers at the meeting were Richard Felvus, James Bromley, and William Illingworth. Of Mr Bromley's characteristic deliverance I have elsewhere written. Felvus was sententious, fervid, and *impinging*, and mixed well with more rhetorical advocates. Mr Illingworth was in the fullness of his popularity and power. A professor of elocution pronounced him the greatest master of the art then living. He certainly was endowed with the physique of an actor, a rotund and flexile voice, a handsome and expressive face, a tall and stately figure, and a vivid and intense delivery. But he was too artificial and self-conscious. Of the former quality an amusing demonstration was afforded by one of our ministerial humorists, the Rev. William Smith, who had been so often an eye and ear witness of the delivery of this speech that he began to anticipate every word and movement of the speaker, as he sat behind him on the platform. It was as if he had the elocutionist completely under his command by some strange mesmeric influence. I sat where I could see both, and the speaker's mouth and hands seemed to move exactly as the unseen performer listed. Of course, only those who were favourably seated on the platform could witness this most entertaining impromptu exhibition.

Another tickling incident occurred at the close of the meeting. Michael Braithwaite, a powerful local preacher, was asking me about my father, whom he had known well in the Thirsk Circuit, when Mr Illingworth, who had become hoarse with vociferation, came up to me, and in the tenderest and

most fraternal tone remonstrated on my excessive physical exertion. The shrewd old Michael turned upon him archly, and said: "I suppose you feel like the country parson who was famous both for drinking and for preaching against drunkenness, who, when his church-wardens wondered at the inconsistency, replied: 'If you'd such a headache as I have every morning, you'd preach against drunkenness.'"

"*April 17.*—Visited the widow of my old friend Philip Garrett. Then read Candlish's new sermon on '*Prove all things*': ingenious; in whatever he writes one sees the outgoings of a powerful intellect, but his lucubrations are too often fanciful and far-fetched. In the afternoon walked to the Grove."

On Sunday, April 23, I preached in Pitt Street Chapel, Liverpool. I was entertained at the house of a thoughtful, gentlemanly, educated merchant, who had married into the choice Methodist New Connexion family, the Ridgeways of the Potteries. Even then Pitt Street had begun to decline, though attended by some of our best families, such as mine host and Mr Braik, a rare friend to Methodist preachers and their sons. My kind host and my old tutor, the Rev. Henry Chettle, devoted themselves on the Monday to showing me the lions of Liverpool; majestic and imposing, but far fewer and far tamer than their successors of to-day. There and then I first gazed on the phenomenon of plate-glass windows in the shops. I preached at Aigburth in the evening, in an aristocratic little chapel with an organ. I was thankful for an introduction to the leading Liverpool Methodist of that day, Mr Michael Ashton, who also took a most affectionate interest in "Preacher's sons." I found him worthy of his reputation for gentlemanly, fascinating manners.

In the same month I got my first glimpse at Chester Methodism, being the guest of Mr and Mrs Harrison, the parents of my inestimable friend Henry B. Harrison, of Manchester, and of my endeared, lamented school-fellow, George Morley Harrison, of the same city, and Mr Richard Harrison, of Chester. Mr Harrison, senr., was an old Kingswood boy, replete with reminiscences of that historic seminary. Mrs Harrison, daughter of Governor Morley, was one of the elect ladies of the time, quite worthy of her parents, her brother, and her sister, and added to the rich stock of family virtues a happy glow of temperament and a beaming graciousness of

manner. I was persuaded to linger for three days in that unique, romantic city, enjoying them the more from familiarity with its history derived from a portly volume lent me by George Harrison at school. On successive evenings I heard the two ablest and most popular clergymen of the place—one of them a favourite author—preach the most pronounced Calvinism, the one educing the doctrine of Final Perseverance from “Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world”; and the other eliciting the dogma of Unconditional Election from “Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out.”

CHAPTER XI

AN UNFINISHED CHRONICLE

I SPENT the brief vacation between Redditch and Kettering, partly in the supernumerary's cottage at Belper, and partly amongst my friends in Lincolnshire.

I left Lincoln for Kettering at six A.M. by coach, and had a delightful six hours' drive. We passed through three places of great interest to me : Woolsthorpe, the secluded birthplace of Sir Isaac Newton, whence we had a splendid view of Burleigh Park, the scene of one of Tennyson's most popular productions ; Stamford, with its fine churches ; and the delightful village of King's Cliffe, the birthplace and the home of William Law. Though as yet I knew none of Law's books but his *Christian Perfection* and his *Serious Call*, still, as the horses were being changed, I gazed with reverent interest on the spot where had lived that impressive compound of the mediæval mystic and the mediæval saint, who spent in this retired and charming spot the first nineteen and the last five and twenty years of a life devoted to the exercises of a severe, methodical, and yet beneficent religiousness. The place itself is like the personality which has made it famous, most picturesque, most striking and unique. The Cliffe, which dominates and shelters it, presents a bold, arresting front after the long stretch of level lands by which it is approached. The features of the little, quaint old town are antique and striking, the manor-house (" Palace " it is locally denominated) in which Law lived and died, and the schools and almshouses, monuments of his munificent philanthropy. For a quarter of a century this sequestered nook was the Delphos from which oracles were issued to inquiring souls, whilst it was the Acropolis from which poured forth most powerful polemics.

I reached Kettering at noon. I found that my appointment on the morrow to Desborough involved a seven miles'

walk. I reached the place somewhat weary and depressed, but exhaustion and low spirits disappeared at the sight of the charming villa where I was to stay, enclosed by delectable gardens, and by the warmth of my reception. It was, in fact, the most luxurious quarters at which I had ever yet been billeted. This warmth of welcome was due to the fact that Mr and Mrs Thompson were close friends of my uncle Towler, and had often been his guests. To be entertained at young Mr Thompson's was like "going to heaven in silver slippers." I greatly enjoyed my first Sunday in the Kettering Circuit, preaching at Desborough morning and evening, and Rothwell, not quite two miles distant, in the afternoon. The Desborough chapel was packed both times, and that almost entirely by regular seatholders. We had an organ, played by a paid and enthusiastic organist, and a strong choir. Desborough was decidedly the most flourishing "cause" in the Circuit. The meeting of the classes was delightful, the attendance was so full, the singing so enlivening and uplifting, and the experiences so solid and so bright. Methodism was, in fact, by far the predominant church in the large and thriving village. Mr Thompson, junior, was the great employer of the neighbourhood as a velvet manufacturer; the principal shopkeepers, Mr Thompson, senior, and Mr Perkins, were Methodists, and the leading farmer, Mr Nursey, was a Methodist.

Before service on the Sunday morning Mr Thompson, senior, called to greet me, and to explain certain peculiarities in the way of conducting the service, to which he hoped I should not object. I told him that, on the other hand, I rather liked a little variation in local modes of worship, and that, even in the Established Church, and in the old Popish times, there were different "Uses," even in cathedrals, "the use of Sarum," etc. He was a pleasant-mannered old gentleman, but seemed as tenacious of local pronunciation as of local customs; *e.g.*, "You know, Muster Gregory, it's *are* (our) custom." My accommodating tone and bearing quite charmed the patriarch, so we became fast friends.

At Rothwell we had a good chapel, but in a very uncentral situation, and here we were "a feeble folk" compared with the Congregationalists, of which denomination this was a stronghold. They had a powerful "interest," a fine old chapel, and here had been one of the most effective Congregationalist colleges, that

in which Dr Harris, the great preacher of the time after Chalmers, Irving, Hall and Watson had departed, had been trained, under Dr Walter Scott, afterwards Principal of Airedale, and the third *Congregational Lecturer*. Nevertheless, we had a very fair congregation, and a very good society, mainly through the influence of Mr Cook, a prosperous baker, and one of the happiest, kindest, and most lovable Christians it ever was my privilege to know. He always seemed to dwell "in regions mild of calm and serene air"; his spiritual temperature was that of a climate in which the atmospheric balance is so exquisite that a snowstorm and a thunderstorm are alike unknown. The expression of his face bespoke

"a sacred and homefelt delight,
A sober certainty of waking bliss."

And this was confirmed and strengthened by his buoyancy of step and his self-possessed promptitude and animation. He was leader of the choir, and his voice was as sweet and modulated as his spirit and his temper. We always took tea at his house after preaching at Rothwell in the afternoon, and he would invite some of the members to meet the preacher. One of his happy habits was, if the conversation seemed drifting into unprofitable small-talk, to strike up some cheery hymn to some delicious tune. His favourite was:—

"'Tis religion that can give
Sweetest pleasures whilst we live;
'Tis religion must supply
Solid comfort when we die.
After death, its joys will be
Lasting as eternity."

Of the first two lines he was himself a lovely illustration; and no wonder that his death scene was in evidence of the second couplet; and who can doubt that he is now experiencing the last? His son, a smart and wide-awake youth of fourteen, used to take up the strain as soon as started, and, better still, he soon took up his father's testimony, and in due time his father's offices and services, and was for forty-three years a pillar in our Church and an ornament to Methodism both in commercial and civil life. When I had to cover the five miles to Kettering, in order to be in the pulpit at six o'clock, after preaching at Desborough in the morning, and walking to

Rothwell and preaching in the afternoon, and he thought I looked hardly up to the mark, he would tell his son to put the pony into the bread-cart and take me half the way. This gave me an opportunity, which I was glad to seize, of a tender and affectionate enforcement of his father's favourite ditty, to which he lent a reverent and docile ear.

Another member of our Society at Rothwell was Miss Elizabeth Tasker, afterwards Mrs Maw of Howden. Though by nature and by early environment of a rough and hard texture, yet a succession of reverses, and the modelling genius of "patience," when she had "her perfect work" and laid on her last fine finishing touches, brought out a noble and attractive character. Thirty years later, when stationed in the Howden Circuit, I became acquainted rather intimately with Mrs Maw. The protracted illness and death of her husband had plunged her into poverty and debt. But she contrived to support herself, to pay all debts, and to find money for unostentatious charity by making and selling *toffee*. Her deep piety, her studious habits, and her strong common sense rendered her one of the pillars of Methodism in the little town. Despite certain peculiarities of manner she seemed to me almost a perfect example of the Christian gentlewoman.

The third place I preached at in the Kettering Circuit was Rushton, a sweet, secluded, agricultural village. Mr Thompson always sent his phaeton to take me there and bring me back. We had no chapel, but preached in the spacious house-place of a comfortable farmstead. There were two buildings in Rushton of special interest: a strange, antique, triangular mansion, the residence of the conspirator Tresham, who betrayed the Gunpowder Plot; and the seat of Mr Beresford Hope, with a lodge of exquisite design and execution.

Our Kettering chapel was small and hid away, and our Society and our regular congregations were numerically insignificant as compared with the powerful "interests" of the Congregationalists and the Baptists, and with the imposing frontage and the lofty vantage-ground of the Established Church. But our family pews were occupied by some most interesting households. Strange to say, our two most prominent men were both from the West Riding of Yorkshire. Mr Tordoff, our only retired gentleman of independent fortune, hailed from Bradford, and Mr Richard Fish, brother of our

popular and eloquent preacher, Henry Fish, A.M., sprang from the remotest village in the Pontefract Circuit. Mrs Rossell, the widow of the lamented John Rossell, who had died in the Kettering Circuit, was very exceptionally intelligent and cultivated. A well-to-do, noble-looking farmer, with a gentlemanly son, the leading druggist of the town, formed a striking figure as one looked down from the pulpit. A brush-manufacturer in the place was also a local preacher, as was also one of the most public characters, the *crier*. The *Vox Clamantis* in the streets of Kettering gave notice of sales by auction and of lost articles in the most solemn pulpit tones and cadences. The rest of our Society, except the Bank Manager and a prosperous tailor, were employed chiefly in the Northampton boot-trade or as farm-labourers.

The most peculiar feature of our congregation was presented at the first Sunday evening service of the month. This being "Ordinance Sunday" at the large Congregationalist and Baptist Chapels, and the Lord's Supper being administered in the afternoon, accompanied by a long and carefully prepared address, there was no evening service in either of these sanctuaries. Hence our chapel was crowded with Congregationalists and Baptists who missed that spiritual opportunity. As the result of this, I became closely acquainted with the leading families of both churches; such as the Tingles, the Isitts, the Jameses, and above all Mr Toller's two brothers, and the delightful group of Wallaces of Barton Latimer.

When we preached at Kettering in the morning and the evening, we always had to conduct an afternoon service at a village two miles distant, famous in the sporting world as "the meeting place for the gentlemen of the Pytchley Hunt." But our trudge was well repaid. We were sure of a full chapel, and a lively, eager audience, and some sweet singing from the flourishing Sunday school.

My third Sunday's appointment was incredible, yet it recurred monthly. I had to preach at Kettering in the morning, and at Cottingham, nine miles distant, in the afternoon and evening, the former service beginning at half-past two. Of course my dinner had to be "eaten in haste," if not "with staff in hand," like a Passover before a strenuous and impetuous march. I put my pedestrian powers to proof, but,

as may well be believed, I did not cover the nine miles in two hours. I was called in question by Brother West, our most worthy and efficient leading man, for being so much after time. I replied: "Well, but, you know, I preached at Kettering this morning, and I only took a quarter of an hour to bolt what should have been my dinner, and I've really done my best to get here as soon as possible." Well, sir," he answered, "you should have walked *fe-aster*." "I walked as I dare," I replied. "But the others have done it," he rejoined. "Look at me," I said, "has any one of 'the others,' even John Rossell, been of such a flimsy make as I am? And you know that this sort of thing cost the Circuit or the Contingent Fund his 'funeral expenses.' Besides, what did 'the others' say about it?" "Oh, they—some of 'em—were very *rash* and *stunt* about it."

My host was an itinerant draper, and of course required a horse and waggon for his trips. He took pity on me, and promised that if I would clear the toll-gate in time, he would meet me and convey me the rest of the way. Brother Collins was keen-witted and of a facile utterance, and having served in the navy in his youth had seen a good deal of the world, and made a note of it. There was about Mrs Collins a refinement both of face and manner so superior to her surroundings that I often wondered how she had acquired it. One winter evening when I was suffering from a very bad cold, she insisted on my putting my feet in hot water, and on carrying up the foot-bath and the jug. On my protesting she said roguishly: "Now don't give yourself any airs; I've done this many a time for a greater man than you." "That may easily be," I replied, "but who was it?" "Robert Hall," she answered; "I was his housekeeper in Leicester for several years, and was married from his house. The doctor gave me the strictest charge whenever he seemed at all off the balance, to lose no time in getting him upstairs, putting his feet in hot water, and getting him to bed." The mystery of refinement and untiring, listening, deferential intelligence was quite plain.

On the Tuesday I preached at Rockingham, a really romantic village adorning the slope of a steep hill, where the tableland suddenly breaks off sheer into the valley of the Welland. The hill is crowned by a commanding castle of great historic interest, especially as the scene of one of the most striking passages in English Church history, the contest

between William Rufus and the great Archbishop Anselm. Every cottage had before it a lovely flower-garden, which garlanded the hillside as if with festive decoration. We preached in the house of our entertainers—three antiquated bachelor brothers named Porter, each with his own special group of eccentricities. In person and attire each would have made a study for any artist engaged in illustrating village life. The eldest was crippled with rheumatism, but as cheerful as a lark.

On the Wednesday I preached at Gretton, mine host being the brother of my triple host at Rockingham. But there was no eccentricity about him, but a most patriarchal dignity and suavity; for had he not been blessed with the education of a happy marriage?

Our chapel at Gretton was a neat little sanctuary, a monument of the energy and liberality of Henry Fish, but it did not attract a large congregation.

On Thursday evening I preached at Corby, and was entertained by a lady of very marked superiority, Miss Greer, the mistress of the British and Foreign School in the place. She became the wife of the Rev. Edward Russell.

It must be seen that the Kettering Circuit was no invalid's refuge, at least for the horseless young man. Moreover, after my five days' hard walking, preaching, and pastoral work, I had to tramp a good eight miles to reach my study in Kettering. Nevertheless I greatly enjoyed both my work and my surroundings. And, again, I had the advantage of a most congenial superintendent, the Rev. Ralph Gibson, father of the Rev. William Gibson, so long and so honourably connected with our French work. He was a great admirer of my father's preaching, with which he had been familiar in his youth, in his native Circuit, Barnard Castle, and during his term in the Belper Circuit after my father's retirement to that town as a supernumerary. In the latter place we had become acquainted during my vacations, for he was very attentive to his old pastor. I was well known to him also through his two eldest sons, who had been my pupils at Woodhouse Grove. He was one of the humblest and meekest of men. Assuredly, he did not "think of himself more highly than he ought to think," but, on the contrary, erred in self-depreciation. Yet his appreciation of others was most hearty and outspoken. I can never forget

bringing tears into his eyes by telling of a devoted member of our Society at Denby Pottery, who was converted under his ministry. His preaching was fervid, loving, animated, and enriched by industrious reading of the best authors. Having private property, he had amassed a rich theological library, to which I had free access. He had a keen insight into character, and his conversation, mainly Methodistic, was very interesting and instructive, ranging over an itinerancy of twenty-eight years and a Methodist life of forty-three.

Mrs Gibson was a very kind and genial hostess. She was of the fine old Norfolk family of the Sewells. Her Norfolk neatness, tallness and erectness were very pleasant to behold, reminding me much of my dear mother, as did the deftness and resource of her Norfolk cookery.

We had a beautiful institution at Kettering, which brought me into still closer connexion with the chief Nonconformist families, and, better still, into firm friendship with the two distinguished ministers, Mr Toller, the Congregationalist, and Mr Robinson, the Baptist. This was a monthly Missionary Prayer-meeting, held at the three chapels in rotation—the first of the kind I was ever acquainted with. It was very popular with all the three denominations. The minister of the chapel where it was held was responsible for the Address. The September meeting was in our chapel, and Mr Gibson requested me to take it. Of course I obeyed, and knowing that two such men would be my hearers, along with a number of their most intelligent and cultured people, I was anxious to do a bit of my best. So I made a brand-new missionary appeal for the occasion. I was greatly animated by the singing, especially by the exquisite sweetness of Mr Robinson's voice, which was so expressive of his disposition. The two great preachers invited me to join them the next day, and as often as possible, in their constitutional, which they always took together. This to me was "great spoil," because of their intellectual strength and keenness, their rich culture, and their wide reading. I was the better able to profit by their colloquies through my familiarity with the works and lives of some of the greatest Puritan divines, and with those of some of the noblest Nonconformist preachers and writers of the century, such as Howe, Baxter, and Thomas Goodwin, Robert Hall, M'All, and Foster, and above all through my having been an eager student of the

Eclectic Review during its palmyest days, when Josiah Conder was its editor, and Robert Hall, John Foster, Southey, and Montgomery were on its staff. Conversation being a kind of mental "commerce," the miscellaneousness of my reading supplied me with sufficient ready money to go to market with.

Free and frequent intercourse with such men as Toller and Robinson was a grand thing for me at this early period of my ministry. And I gained, through them, an introduction to a large circle of Dissenting ministers. By the request, and on the nomination of these two eminent men, I became a member of the "Fraternal Meeting" of Nonconformist ministers of Northamptonshire and Leicestershire. I found them to be a cultivated, gentlemanly, genial body of men, and their rotatory gatherings were most delightful and improving. Next to Thomas Toller and W. Robinson, Henry Toller of Market Harborough was by far the finest of the whole fraternity. Although several members of the meeting were eager politicians, and Henry Toller was a leading factor in the formation of *The British Anti-State-Church Association* in the spring of 1844 (now *The Liberation Society*), yet politics were never touched upon either in our discussions or at meal times. We had enough to do with Biblical and doctrinal subjects. The last meeting I attended was at Braybrooke, the strong-featured village in the parish church of which Andrew Fuller preached the funeral sermon of a Baptist deacon. Our subject of discussion was the *seventh of Romans*. The essayist took the old Calvinian view that the passage was descriptive of the normal condition of a believer. As our rule was junior counsel first, I had to lead off, and felt obliged to take the directly opposite position. My argument was (1) that the disconnecting of the seventh chapter from the eighth was exegetically inadmissible, inasmuch as the two were indissolubly linked together by the word "*therefore*" in the first verse of the eighth; (2) that the Apostle's summing up was fatal to the conclusion of the essayist, the former being: "The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus *hath made me free from the law of sin and death*: . . . *that the righteousness of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit*" (vers. 2, 4); (3) that the Calvinian view completely nullified the inspired argument, by making *Grace* as important as *Law*, since, according to this view, "what the Law could not do, in that it

was weak through the flesh," Grace "could not do," for the selfsame reason; (4) that to adjust interpretation to a conventional standard of experience was to reverse the one true and legitimate process, which was to string up experience to straightforward exposition; (5) that the phenomena of average experience were provided for elsewhere; namely, in Galatians v. 16-18, "This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh: for the flesh lusteth against the Spirit," etc.; (6) that in Romans vii. the Apostle was evidently describing, not a permanent phase of spiritual life, but only an early stage of that life, since he begins with, "*When we were in the flesh*," and goes on to record his own agonising experience under the conviction of sin, and ends with a contrasted delineation of what "there is *now*" to the believer who lives up to his duty, his privilege, and the glorious Dispensation and the effective Reign of Grace.

Mr Toller took my side with amazing energy and animation; but with one or two exceptions, all the rest, including Mr Robinson, adhered to the Calvinian exegesis. But the discussion was adjourned to the next meeting, and as I had engaged to stay another year at Kettering I was told off to read the next paper.

Mr Toller's scientific hermeneutics led him straight to Wesleyan Methodist theology, excepting on our doctrine of the *Witness of the Spirit*, which had been presented to him in a quite too stark and rigid form. Happily, my intercourse with the two great Kettering preachers did not terminate with my appointment to that most interesting town. On successive visits to that place I either called on Mr Toller or he was invited to sup with me. Mr Robinson accepted a call to the chapel of Robert Hall and of the earlier Robinson at Cambridge. He wrote me an earnest invitation to preach in his pulpit, but I was not then at liberty to do so. However, during the first meeting in Cambridge of the First London District, I had the privilege of delivering the address at a special Sacramental service in Mr Robinson's chapel, and was the guest of the most distinguished member of his church. After hearing me preach in our own chapel he came in to my host's house, and gave himself to reminiscences of the dear old days at Kettering. Mrs Robinson told me that she had never seen her husband so *elated* by a service in her life.

Henry Toller, of Market Harborough, was struck down in the fulness of his strength, like a cedar of Lebanon by a lightning-bolt from the cloudless empyrean. I saw no little of him in his own town and in Kettering. In visiting the latter place he used to stay with his brother William, who would send for me to spend the evening with him. He was one of the noblest and the gentlest of men. Like his brother Thomas, he was on the best terms with his Methodist neighbours, and was a *standing dish* at our public meetings. His kindness to me was most pronounced. I do not know of any adequate memorial of these Nonconformist worthies. I have all the greater satisfaction in dropping a wreath upon their graves. The very able politician and polemic, Edward Miall, showed himself, however, to be one of the best preachers of his time by his sermon on the death of Henry Toller.

Mr Thomas Toller's tenderness to me was most paternal. He was to me a kingly nursing father.

Another rich and unexpected boon accrued to me through that first missionary prayer-meeting. A few mornings later, Mr Hawthorne, one of the principal Dissenters of the place, introduced himself to me with a proposal which he thought might prove of some advantage to us both. He explained that he had just recovered from a disabling and most distressing attack of depression of spirits, brought on by excessive devotion to business, that his business required long country drives, and that his doctor counselled him to have on such occasions, whenever practicable, some communicative companion to prevent his relapsing into a diseased self-consciousness. "You will find it a not uninteresting little trip." I gratefully embraced his offer to act in this capacity.

We first called upon a family who were members of Mr Robinson's church; the daughter was a kind of chartist pythoness in her teens. Mr Hawthorne had just returned from Waterloo, which he described with great minuteness and precision; and he told me of a place not far out of our route which the Duke of Wellington pronounced to be more like the field of Waterloo than any spot he had ever seen. It was part of the estate of Colonel Arbuthnot, whose modest mansion was the Duke's favourite retreat when tired of politics and fashion. Being well acquainted with the Colonel, he took me to see both the house and the grounds. I found the two confronting

ridges to correspond in height and steepness with the descriptions of the battlefield which I had heard and read, but the area seemed very small for two such armies to deploy and to manœuvre in.

By universal consent the best local preacher in the Kettering Circuit was Mr Richard Fish. Like his brother, he was a man of stature, and though he had no pretensions to his brother's reading or his brother's rhetoric, his preaching excelled that of his brother in spiritual intensity and impressiveness as much as it fell below in literary elaboration and charm. The brothers were an immense credit to their father, the country schoolmaster in the far away hamlet in which they were born and bred. Richard Fish had austere views as to the gravity befitting a Methodist minister, and evidently held that his table-talk ought to consist of nothing but what was immediately conducive "to the use of edifying." As he was a Yorkshireman, I not unnaturally assumed that my Yorkshire tales would entertain and please him, especially as a vein of humour would crop up here and there in the course of his own observations. But he tried to put a check upon my laughable recitals by the resolute repression of his own risibility. The effect was more diverting than the richest story I could tell. Long after I had taken the hint, and turned the conversation to some serious subject, he would explode into most irrelevant, convulsive laughter, his sense of the ludicrous having overmastered him. Mr Fish drew a broad, deep line of demarcation between grave and gay.

Mr Fish was mighty in prayer. At our prayer-meetings he rose to a white heat of holy fervour, and his features would take on a strange incandescent pallor. The attendance at our week-night prayer-meetings and our week-night preaching was very disheartening to one who had left behind the large and lively gatherings at Redditch, even taking into consideration the comparative smallness of our Society and our ordinary Sunday congregations. The men employed in the Northampton boot trade were accustomed to work late, though they worked at home. The more skilled workmen made a very comfortable living, and seemed on good terms with society and their own environment; the less skilled were much inclined to levelling theories. On my round of pastoral visitation, I called on one of these and asked why we never saw him at the prayer-

meeting. His reply was rather clever. "Because your prayer-meeting is a *Qualification prayer-meeting*." But when I urged him to break into and break up this hateful and unchristian disqualification, the exhortation had no practical effect upon him.

At this time I worked rather hard at pastoral visitation, especially in the villages, and found it very interesting and remunerative, both as to personal edification and as to an insight into character and human nature. Here, too, as in my former circuits, I tried to gather a Bible-class of young men; but our leading families comprised no sons of a suitable age, and the young working-men were far more disposed to give instruction than receive it. At our first meeting, they told me through their spokesman that they could take no interest in systematic or continuous instruction of any kind, that the only sort of class they cared for was one in which *they* should choose the subjects and lay down their own laws of discussion, or do without any rules at all. What they wanted was a kind of lingual game at football. Seeing that I could find a better investment of my time than presiding over a weekly entertainment of this sort, I recommended them to find some other place of meeting, and to select or elect some other chairman, or to be "all of them kings in their turn."

I did my best, though unsuccessfully, to introduce Methodism to the large village of Geddington, a few miles from Kettering. I paid the bell-man to announce the service, and at seven P.M. took my stand on the topmost step of the exquisite memorial cross which forms the most attractive feature of the place. It is by far the most graceful of the three crosses I have seen out of the ten erected by Edward I. at each pausing place of the funeral procession of Queen Eleanor, the other two being amongst the chief antiquities of Northampton and of Waltham Abbey. Probably the beautiful structure at Geddington owes its superiority to the fact that it has never been improved or "restored." The apex of the cross just returned the last rays of the setting sun as I took my elevated stand. The sturdy men-folks gave me gruff, curt thanks, as I shook hands with them. But we could get no foothold in the place.

Of all the places in the district at which I preached or spoke at public meetings none interested me so much as Naseby. The worthy farmer at whose house I was to stay

sent a trap by a neighbour who was glad of the opportunity of spending a Sunday with his friends at Kettering. He told me that if I turned off the main road about three miles from Naseby, and took a broad field-road, I should have a survey of the famous battlefield, with no other inconvenience than having to get out and open a succession of gates. When I left the road the westering sun was shining brilliantly, but whilst I was moving leisurely and meditatively over the historic ground the most unlooked for tempest fell upon us. I do not remember to have ever known a storm of such seemingly preternatural and uncanny suddenness in its unwarning swoop. I had left the field-roadway for the open field for purposes of exploration, and before I could regain it the darkness had become so dense that I could not see the horse. If ever a man's "way was hid," mine was then. It was an unforgettable illustration of Virgil's "night profound," and Charles Wesley's "darkness intercepts the skies." I knew that I must still be about a mile and a half from the village, but I also knew that I had small cause for very serious apprehension, as I felt sure that the horse could find its way back to the road, and then, of course, to its master's gate. So, taking care not to give the slightest hint as to the direction in which I wished to move, I cried cheerily, "Gee up." After many bumps and oscillations, and suggestions of "the Bay of Biscay, O!" my sagacious steed came to a sudden standstill. On descending and feeling about to discover the obstruction, I was most thankful to find a closed gate, the assurance that we were on the right track again. At last, after many gates, I found myself in front of a farm-gate, and could catch the glimmer of a light from a casement. A call brought out mine host, who had been far more apprehensive than myself. He had divined the situation, and concluded that I must have been told of this field-road by the battle-ground, and he feared that I had ventured off the track to reconnoitre, and that I had got bewildered in the intense darkness. He was arranging a search-party, consisting of his men servants and the cottagers close by.

I much enjoyed the Sunday. The storm departed as capriciously as it had come; the sun shone bright on the thatched marl-cottages and the farmsteads, and the strange old central church, with its stunted steeple, surmounted not by a furbished fighting cock, but by a copper globe, like enough to

a well-soaped bald head to win it the popular designation "Naseby old man." I devoted Monday morning to a thorough survey of the battle-field. The Parliamentarians had the vantage ground: Rupert had to charge up hill, but Cromwell could charge down hill. The physical geography of Naseby, as well as its historical associations, make it worthy of a pilgrimage. Besides being the Gilboa of despotic monarchy and the Marathon of British liberty, it is the watershed of many counties, on the one side to the German Ocean and to the Atlantic on the other. *Avon's Well* springs up hard by the village, and the Welland and the Nen ooze out of the "marish mosses" on the eastern slope of the undulating tableland. The Avon flowing westward maketh glad the academic trees of Rugby, acquires a world-wide immortality of fame by beautifying the birthplace and burial-place of Shakespeare, fertilizes the teeming vale of Evesham, and after a gladsome course of a hundred miles joins the Severn near the battlefield of Tewkesbury, and swells its volume as it bears onwards to the Bristol Channel and the Western main. The Nen makes its way by Northampton, Fotheringay Castle, Peterborough, to Wisbech and the Wash. The Welland wins its winding, weltering way to Stamford, and thence glides through the pastures and cornlands of Lincolnshire—alike subservient to commerce and to agriculture—to Spalding and the sea. Thus the historic elevation and beneficent importance of Naseby fight are symbolised by its remarkable topography.

The meeting on the Monday evening was most interesting. The place was packed by hardworking people in whose equable and quiet lives that yearly missionary meeting was a welcomed festival. The chairman was a clergyman of family and fortune, bearing the aristocratic prefix *Fitz*. He was intensely earnest, devout, and, in a remarkable degree, united Millenarian views with missionary ardour. The most telling speech was that of a minister from Northampton whom I then met for the first time, the Rev. Robert Sherwell. In after years, it was my happiness to be frequently and rather closely connected with this cheery, kindly, Christianity-commending man of God, and I always found him the same genial spirit.

Another most delightful excursion which I was called to make from Kettering was to Kimbolton, Hunts. No literary

tourist should let slip the chance of visiting Kimbolton. I found it worthy of its rich, though saddening associations. The almost solemn stillness of its umbrageous seclusion, and its old-world architecture, which wears the aspect of a bit of the sixteenth century lingering on into the nineteenth, seemed wonderfully fitting to the last scene of one of the most pathetic tragedies in English history. Here Katharine of Aragon found her last place of banishment, imprisonment, and unrelenting humiliation. In this sequestered nook, selected by her heartless husband on account of its loneliness and isolation, the daughter of Ferdinand and Isabella, born and brought up in the sunny south of Spain, in the glow of the golden climate of Granada; married at seventeen to the heir-apparent of the English throne; a widow five months after her wedding; married to the heir-apparent by special dispensation of the Pope, crowned Queen of England, with her husband, Henry VIII., one of the handsomest and richest monarchs in the world, made immensely richer and more powerful by her enormous dowry and her grand connexions; for four and twenty years the ornament of a brilliant court, and then divorced and discrowned without the faintest allegation against her, by a husband already married to another woman; and reduced to poverty by a husband who would not divorce her dowry—passed her last days. One of the noblest of women, in every sense of the term—high born and high souled—the aunt of the mightiest monarch in Christendom, the Emperor Charles V. of Germany, deserted and dishonoured, and in destitution of what were to her the necessities of life—the culminating cruelty, the deprivation of her illegitimated daughter to wait upon the child of her heartless supplanter, broke at last that strong, heroic heart. She died at fifty in the depth of an English winter. Her letter to her husband just before she died is a gem of Christian correspondence of “purest ray serene.” No wonder that it brought tears into those flinty eyes. For myself, I can never read it without a lump in the throat. And the scene in Shakespeare’s *Henry VIII.* (act iv., scene 2) makes Kimbolton classic ground. For subdued and solemn pathos, and as the presentation of majestic meekness, I know not where it is surpassed except in Holy Writ. The combination of queenly dignity with saintly resignation is most wonderful.

A sweet surprise awaited me in this sequestered spot. The Moravian minister of the place was invited to meet us at tea and on the platform. I was delighted to find in him the former minister of the Moravian Church at Baildon, three miles from Woodhouse Grove. He, too, was pleased to meet with one who knew something of his former flock. The Moravians of Baildon were worthy of the best days of the Renewed Church of the Brethren. A touching incident occurred amongst them during my tutorship at Woodhouse Grove. The mother of the little church, who was greatly revered by all good people in the neighbourhood, died, leaving an unmarried daughter. After the funeral the leading members of the church accompanied the bereaved young lady to her desolated home. They assured her that there was not one of them who would not feel it a privilege and a blessing to adopt her as an inmate of their dwelling, and pressed her to make her selection without delay. She thanked them warmly, but said she could not decide at once; "for," said she, "I do not yet know what the Master means to do with me." She also declined to let any one stay with her for the night, though she kept no servant, saying that she wished to be alone. Knowing her habits of contemplative communion with God they respected her desire. The next morning when some of them called to see her, they were surprised to find the shutters closed and the door still bolted. They knocked loudly, concluding that she had stayed up till daybreak and then fallen into a heavy sleep. But at last they forced the door and stole up into her bedroom. They found her in a "rapture of repose," sleeping the holy, radiant sleep which "God giveth His beloved." The Master had "come and called for" her. She had changed her funeral weeds for her bridal dress. There was no sign of sickness or of struggle, and no "shadow of death." They laid her beside her mother on "the hill of winds." The significant articles of dress and furniture were bought by a Methodist of Bingley, a friend of mine, who was fain to show them to his guests as venerated relics.

After the meeting I had a delightful moonlight drive of ten miles to Higham Ferrers, with the superintendent, the Rev. John Brown. The nightingales in the roadside copses seemed to have got up a special concert in our honour. This particular

John Brown was a very choice brother, reminding me of a remark made to me by Dr Newton with regard to the late Rev. Joseph Hargreaves: "Every one that loves goodness must love *him*." He was one of our most tear-moving preachers and yet "a son of consolation." He governed by the force of gentleness, good sense, and graciousness. In Conference he was a familiar and a striking figure; tall, spare, hoary-headed, with an almost feminine softness in his eager, listening look. He was ever "swift to hear and slow to speak."

The five days of the district meeting at Bedford were to me delectable. My quarters were of the choicest, at Mr Hill's, whose admirable wife was a daughter of Mr Isitt, one of the two leading Methodists. Mr Isitt, who had already retired from business, had been my father's greatest friend when stationed in the Bedford Circuit in 1801. Here I made two valuable friendships, with Philip Fowler and John Bonser. Fowler was then in the fifth year of his ministry, and Bonser in the second. I had met the former two years earlier at Nottingham, but had no communications with him. He joined me frequently at meals during the week, being, of course, a prodigious favourite with the Hills. I was much smitten with his sweetness, brightness, spirituality and earnestness. Yet he was not without aggressive humour, and had much of the fibre of his sister, Mrs Calvert. Bonser was already a B.A. He gave me a most interesting and touching account of his pursuit of knowledge under difficulties, and we had close and earnest comparison of notes as to the most remunerative lines of study. His character was lovely, and his intellect well-balanced, sedately and yet eagerly acquisitive.

One great advantage I derived from the friendship and consideration of Messrs Robinson and Toller was their inviting me to meet at their house any guest of special interest. Of these the most noted was the young Scotchman, James M'Cosh, so soon and so long to be known to Christendom as Dr M'Cosh, one of the great Christian metaphysicians and apologists of the age. He had come to Northamptonshire with two other eminent Free Church ministers as a deputation to arouse the practical sympathy and secure the financial assistance of the Nonconformist Churches in the great ecclesiastical crisis, the Jubilee of which is this year (1893) celebrated.

At Kettering we had a memorable meeting in Mr Toller's

fine old chapel. M'Cosh cast all the other speakers so completely into the shade that whilst I vividly remember his successive points, yet I cannot now recall a word uttered by the rest. He was then two and thirty years of age, and had given up one of the two or three rich livings in the Kirk, £800 a year, being "minister in first charge" in the district of Brechin. After Guthrie he was by far the most powerful speaker the Free Church produced. He had all the elements of a popular orator. Like Guthrie he was tall, but far more massive and more strongly built, and was eight years younger. He had a forcible and clear articulation, a round, full, sonorous voice, and had all Guthrie's fascinating frankness and directness of address, and his musical Scotch accent. Like him, he took his audience by storm. He strode to the front of the platform and began with: "Ye'll have hard of the auld song, 'Ahll the blue bonets are over the border.'" He sacrificed emphasis to intonation, which made his elocution more piquant. Like Guthrie he was replete with happy illustration and effective anecdote. He showed that the movement was a recurrence to the heroic age of the religious history of Scotland, taking up again its watchwords and its battle-cries, "the Crown-rights of Christ." I supped with M'Cosh at Mr Toller's, and had two hours' close conversation with him on the points at issue in this great contest. The principles were identical with those which Andrew Melville enunciated to James the First and Sixth, for the persistent affirmation of which he suffered four years' incarceration in the Tower of London, and then banishment for life: "Christ Jesus is the King of the Church: whose subject James the Sixth is, and of whose Kingdom he is not a king, nor a lord, nor a head, but a member."

In conversing with M'Cosh one could not but feel oneself in the presence of a great man with a great future, but his career has not been precisely that which was then anticipated. He seemed to be hewn out for a popular Church leader. He has proved to be instead a mighty Biblical and philosophic theologian. Six years afterwards appeared his first great work, *The Method of the Divine Government, Physical and Moral*, followed the next year by his appointment to the Professorship of Logic and Mathematics in Queen's College, Belfast, and then by the Presidency of Princeton College, U.S. By the space of forty years he has been enlightening all English-speaking

peoples by a swift succession of high-class works. I must not omit to note the geniality and heartiness of this great man. As I bade him good-night he gave my hand a proper Northern grip, saying: "Well, if you ivver come to Scoteland, you'll know where to find a welcome."

BOOK II

LATER LIFE

CHAPTER I

SOME FURTHER REMINISCENCES

MY father's "reminiscences" proper end rather abruptly with the closing words of the last chapter. Some additions were made to them in *the Magazine* (after he had resigned the editorship) and in the *Methodist Recorder*. The continuity, however, was broken, and the autobiographic style greatly modified. No account has been left of his later sojourn at Kettering, or of his ordination. Of his sudden removal to the metropolis he writes :—

A little incident occurred at the Birmingham Conference of 1844 which displayed at once the knightly courtesy which Dr Bunting, then for the fourth time President, could evince towards a frank and fair opponent, and the quick, arch humour of which he was the master. Just before the confirmation of the stations, the Rev. Joseph Fowler rose from his seat at the front of the platform as Assistant Secretary. He had received from the stewards of the Second London Circuit, of which he was then superintendent, a communication which rendered quite imperative a change in the appointment. Dr Bunting said, with the most deferential suavity, he was sure the Conference would concede to Mr Fowler, for such a circuit as Great Queen Street, any newly ordained minister for whom he might think fit to ask. A pause ensued, and Mr Fowler ran his quick and searching glance along the line of youthful preachers in the front of the gallery, but was not able to fix upon his man. His difficulty must have been the embarrassment of riches, as the band included men like George T. Perks, Luke H. Wiseman, Alexander M'Aulay, Thomas Vasey, George C. Harvard, and William Davison. Mr Fowler confessed himself to be at a loss. Thereupon one of those "airy tongues

that syllable men's names" (in this case the sonorous tongue of the Rev. G. B. M'Donald) tentatively pronounced the name of one of the youngest and weakest of the neophytes, one who felt himself to be the least likely of them all. "Will that name suit you, Mr Fowler?" asked the President. The latter cast an inquiring glance at Mr Barton, who sat next him. He answered by an acquiescent nod, and so Mr Fowler quietly accepted the incidental nomination. Up started the representative of the Bedford District, as in duty bound, and protested: "Oh! but that brother is engaged to Kettering." "Oh!" exclaimed the President, with a roguish glance at Mr Fowler, "he's at Kettering, is he? That ought to settle it. Two years at Kettering is enough to spoil any young Methodist preacher." This turned the laugh against the senior Journal Secretary, as Kettering had been Mr Fowler's first circuit, where, by admiring contact with Fuller and with Toller, he, though trained a strict Church Methodist, had taken on a pronounced, though unaggressive, Nonconformity. Whilst the brethren were chuckling at the pleasantry, the change was made.

Throughout those happy years I never, but with one exception, saw the chapel otherwise than full at any service either in the evening or the morning of the Sabbath day. Our Society, of not much fewer than a thousand members, served with their *families* to fill one-half at least of that noble temple; and the chapel, being situated in what was then a well-known and highly respectable thoroughfare, leading to Drury Lane and Covent Garden, and backed by the then stately square of Lincoln's Inn Fields, was a favourite place of worship. The vicinage of the Freemasons' Hall, a few doors westward on the same side of the street, a popular and fashionable place for philanthropic and religious gatherings, made the public quite familiar with the building.

On the first Sunday evening in 1845, after the long, exhausting Covenant Service, which the immense number of communicants protracted until after five o'clock, I had to reappear in the Queen Street pulpit to preach the annual sermon to the young. In walked the well-known and unmistakable figure of Lord John Russell, then leader of the Opposition in the House of Commons. The appearance of the great Whig chieftain in a Wesleyan Methodist chapel was the more noticed and the more welcome from the fact that in his "Memoirs of

the Affairs of Europe" he had shown especial detestation and disdain of Methodism, and had since fed fat an ancient grudge he owed it for having, in 1830, in consequence of that fierce and flippant attack, an adverse majority of one on his candidature for the representation in Parliament of his favourite borough Bedford. His change of feeling was attributable, doubtless, to the determined and effective opposition of the Wesleyan Methodists to the Government Education Bill (Sir James Graham's), and to his well-founded hope of their equally vigorous and effective support of the very different bill which he and the Marquess of Lansdowne were preparing. The Conference had ordered special sermons to be preached on religious education in all our principal chapels, and it had fallen to my lot to discharge this duty in Great Queen Street chapel.

One Sunday morning our society steward, on coming to meet me in the vestry, said: "We have some aristocratic visitors to-day. There's a carriage at the chapel door with an earl's coronet upon its panels." Twenty-one years after leaving Queen Street Circuit, I attended the missionary meetings and preached the missionary sermons at Sherborne. The great tragedian Macready took the chair, bespeaking the indulgence of the meeting on the ground that it was the first missionary meeting he had ever attended. He then lived at Sherborne Hall, the seat of Lord Raleigh. The next day he called at my host's (Mr Dingley), as he politely phrased it, "to pay his respects to Mr Gregory." He told me, to my great surprise, that during my ministry at Great Queen Street chapel he became quite familiar with my teaching through his own great religious counsellor and instructor, the Hon. Miss Boyd, who, he said, never missed an opportunity of hearing me in that chapel.¹

The Great Queen Street congregations were not hard to please. They had a catholic taste for every variety of preach-

¹ I was greatly charmed with Macready's personality and bearing, his simplicity and naturalness, although in animated conversation one could not fail to note the eye-flash and the tone and something of the pose and elocution of the most famous actor of his time. There was a classic, Roman dignity about him, only equalled, so far as I have seen, by Lord Stratford de Redcliffe on some great occasion. His countenance revealed his nobleness of character. His almost heroic efforts, both as an actor and as a manager of the Drury Lane and Covent Garden theatres, to purify and elevate the stage and its associations, are matters of our social history. He much deplored the smallness of his success. To my own knowledge he was a most patient and indulgent, as well as a most penetrating and judicious critic of the work of young aspirants to poetic fame. In his "Reminiscences and Diary" his indefatigable

ing gift ; all that they required was *some* veritable, marked endowment from the hand of the ascended Lord.

In two points they were exacting : first, they must have *animation* in the pulpit. Few of them could take interest in a sermon in which the preacher himself seemed but little interested. The first question put to me by Mr Fowler on my appointment to the circuit, after inquiring what was the earliest date on which I could enter on my fresh field, had reference to the former matter. With a significant, mysterious look and tone he asked, "Do you *pivot* in the pulpit?" I confessed myself completely at a loss to imagine what he meant. He replied, "Because they complained of even such a preacher as Isaac Keeling, 'He doesn't *pivot* in the pulpit.'" This explained the phrase completely ; for Isaac Keeling uttered forth his weighty oracles with the immobility of a statue. His message seemed to be impersonal ; he spoke as one who saw visions of the Almighty as if in "a trance, but having his eyes open." I replied to Mr Fowler, "Oh ! if it's pulpit pivoting they want, I'm their man ; for I can't preach without pivoting. I can pivot like a little wooden Highlander on a haystack on a windy day." "So far so good, then," said Mr Fowler, with a comic gravity. The other strong aversion of Great Queen Street Methodists was to homiletic lengthiness. This was a trespass which no charm of thought, imagination, diction, or delivery could condone.

But Great Queen Street was not the only circuit which sorely disaffected lengthy sermons, nor was Mr Bunting the only "trespasser" in this respect. Even Lessey's popularity was heavily discounted. Mr Fowler told me that when he and Lessey were stationed together in Manchester, a member of the quarterly meeting having been profuse in his applause of Mr Lessey's preaching, a privileged old leader cried, "Preich ! preich ! I should think he can preich ! he'd preich a spider to death !" Then turning to the pulpit orator himself, he added, "For my pate (part), as suin as iver it strikes twelve o'clock I nivver hear another word you say. I just lift up my heart i' private prayer to God." In this the blunt old leader did the

labours in the adult night-school at Sherborne are duly chronicled ; but the fact that the Wesleyan Methodist chapel was the regular place of worship of Macready and his family is carefully eliminated by its editor, Sir Frederick Pollock. Macready's scorn and indignation at the idle self-indulgence of the wealthy was superb to see and hear,

orator injustice and himself great wrong, for Lessey seldom reached his meridian splendour before the stroke of twelve. Yet this voiceless supplication was far better than the clattering exodus which was sometimes made by Sunday school teachers and their charges when William Bunting preached with Pauline perseverance. But as a rule the Queen Street services were exemplary for decorum, orderliness, and reverential quietness. The sacramental services were specially impressive, almost every member attending at the table of the Lord. Our praying men and leaders had rather miss the class-meeting than the communion table. Hence there seemed to be a special propriety and significance in one of Mr Fowler's favourite petitions: "Look upon Zion, *the city of our solemnities.*"

The people, too, were individually most estimable and most unforgettable. Our circuit stewards were the son and the son-in-law of the venerable Richard Reece. Richard Marsden Reece was in person as noble and majestic as his father, and his character was still finer than his physique. He was almost an ideal Christian gentleman, the embodiment of moderation and of manliness, of charity and courtesy. He was of stately stature and "of princely port." There was a dignified reserve about him which soon settled into confidential frankness and warmed into cordiality and kindness. He was an appreciative and deferential listener, not an eager and communicative talker. He was a consummate circuit steward; to the ministers considerate and generous; and he swayed the Quarterly Meetings by urbanity, judiciousness, and practical good sense. He was constitutionally cautious, and habitual quietness and gentleness made him an invaluable class-leader for the more reticent and undemonstrative members of the flock, who liked to be led by still waters as well as to lie down in green pastures. Our other circuit steward, Mr Durieu, was his brother-in-law. Mr Durieu had all the amenities and "sweet civilities" of Mr Reece, and all his solid, sterling qualities; but in him the precious metal had more ductility and sparkle. I never heard the delicate, mellifluous London accent, as contrasted with the inharmonious vowel sounds of uncouth cockneyese, so musically rendered as from the lips of Mr Durieu. There was a distinct strain of Norman blood in his contexture, and his finely chiselled features had a rich and rosy tint.

Another of our notabilities, Mr Urling, was also son-in-law

of Richard Reece. Himself and wife and children formed a very striking, pleasing picture in the family pew at Queen Street and at Camden Town, and a charming circle in the home at Gloucester Crescent. They had all fine faces, each with its own peculiar type of beauty. Mr Urling's physiognomy bespoke a bright intelligence with a strong tendency to humour, both playful and sarcastic. He had strong intellectual tastes and tendencies, and had been a member of a philosophical and scientific society along with Faraday. He was a fine singer and a genuine wit, and with all his charming social qualities and his scintillating conversational vivacity, he enjoyed and manifested the life and peace of spiritual-mindedness and of a soul that dwells at ease. He was deeply interested in the Society class of which he was the leader, which met in a secluded neighbourhood to the west of Regent Street, where his place of business was. I attended him in a critical attack of pneumonia. It was most edifying to find in him even then "the goodly peace of stayed minds." I last met him, a short time before his death, at Sir William M'Arthur's, where we had a luxurious retrospect of the dear old time. He showed all the geniality and piquancy of those earlier years. Late in life a benevolent sympathy drew him on to study the causes and the cure of the distressful infirmity of stammering. This he did with the penetration and the patience, and as if under the charmed constraint of scientific genius, so that he became a most successful specialist in the philanthropic art of teaching "the tongue of the stammerers to be ready to speak plainly," having mastered alike the anatomy and the psychology of the perplexing question. Mrs Urling softened down the ancestral goodness of a Reece with a mantling motherly kindness and the sweet simplicity of early Methodism. Some quaint little notions of conventional self-denial supplied a cool subacid to her substantial domestic virtues. Of their fascinating family I forbear to speak, as they still survive; but I must notice the ambrosian evening parties and the Christmas family reunions, of which the recollection is only excelled in sweetness by the beautiful reality. Any one who fancied that good old Methodism was a kill-joy must have been effectually undeceived by an evening at the Urlings'.

Our senior society steward was Mr John Clemence, whose

father was our oldest, and was regarded as our model class leader. The old gentleman was universally revered and highly valued as a spiritual director. He had a large class, which, being well looked up, was wont to meet in force. I was glad of an opportunity of utilising an hour's interval, between the visitation of one class and another, in noting, unseen by him, his time honoured method as a leader. The venerable patriarch spent the whole time either on his knees or on his feet. He took the members *seriatim* as they sat round the large room, standing before each, and pondering with all the earnest interest of a specialist the diagnosis of each case. His most frequent direction was: "Be much in prayer."

His son John was as bright and brisk and business-like as the father was grave and recollected. Mrs John Clemence was the finest specimen I can recall of a gentle, placid Methodism reposing on a background of experimental evangelicalism. She traced her conversion and earliest Christian culture to the earnest ministry of Hawker, of Plymouth, whose "Morning Portion" formed still an indispensable part of her daily spiritual breakfast—a sort of digestive food of health. Through the marriage of a younger brother the Clemences derived the honour of concatenation in that golden chain, the Moulton family and its connexions.

Our poor-stewards, Mr Clement White and Mr Urch, were also most agreeable officials to associate and work with. Indeed, it was from our Great Queen Street leading men that I first learnt to feel the etymologic force of the word *urbanity* as expressive of the delicacy of manner and of bearing which should be characteristic of city life. Mr Urch was one of the famous saddlers of Long Acre immortalised by Dickens. Both Mr White and Mr Urch were cut down in middle life, Mrs White became the wife of the genial gentlemanly Wesleyan minister, Mr William Horton, grandfather of the distinguished London Congregational pastor of that name.

One very notable feature of the Great Queen Street Society was the fact that the Methodism of nearly all its older men was formed by the influence and upon the model of Joseph Butterworth, M.P., of whose Sunday morning class they had been members in the plastic period of their religious history. And a bright, strong, noble type it was. Of these, Mr Hoby, Mr

Blenkarn, and Mr Binnington must claim especial mention. Mr Hoby, who, under Mr Butterworth, had taken a leading part in the building of the chapel, and deemed it an honour to have been his Methodist "Man Friday," is still well remembered by many ministers and laymen. He was our most active and most sensitive trustee. The chapel seemed to be his *big bairn*, for he guarded all its interests as with a paternal sensibility. He was an earnest, though a rather incidental, reader; and his long experience of men and matters made his conversation remarkably instructive. His portrait was painted by Mr Green, and presented to the trustees.

Mr Blenkarn, one of our first-rate class-leaders, "had served his time" with Mr Butterworth as a law-bookseller. A native of York, the first course of his Methodism had been laid by such wise master-builders as Richard Burdsall, Robert Spence, and Joseph Agar. Both his physique and his spirituality were like the tomes in which he chiefly dealt, tall, solid, made to resist a heavy wear and tear, and in a clear and legible, though somewhat antique type.

I found it impossible to re-read Richard Watson's noble sermon on the death of Mr Butterworth, preached in Great Queen Street Chapel, without recognising in the older pillars of the Church the same graceful, serviceable pattern. The first was "an even flow of spiritual-mindedness, uninterrupted by the numerous and varied engagements of an active life, subduing them to its own tranquil dominion, and gently guiding them with unruffled flow each into its proper channel." With this was connected their "devotional" habits, "the religious ordering of the family, and the observance of the Sabbath." Nothing could be more foreign to Great Queen Street Methodism than a bustling, fussy, bumptious externality.

Next came his "regularity, faithfulness and affection" as a class-leader, and the vast and beneficent influence of his "admonitions and advices, his pious and judicious counsels and earnest prayers." Mr Hoby pointed out to me with a kind of tender pride, and with an almost tearful smile, the exact point at which they invariably met at ten minutes to seven o'clock during a long course of years on Sunday mornings.

Another feature which he had impressed upon the young men whose character he had helped to form was its "social"

sympathies. How many of the Queen Street leaders might have sat for this portrait!—

“Kindness of heart, and serenity of manners, . . . a manner at once frank and dignified. . . . The kindliness of his own nature insensibly diffused itself. . . . To young persons he was especially and attractively benign, affectionately stimulating them to exertion, and showing a solicitude for their best interests, the more impressive and influential as it was free from all austerity, and carried with it the soft and penetrating influence of an unaffected benevolence. . . . To be the guide and friend of young men in the commencement of their career, and when thrown upon the hazards of the metropolis, became in him such a habit, that he seemed to be drawn almost instinctively to this important but often neglected species of philanthropy. It was his constant endeavour to engage them in some work of benevolence, as Sunday school teachers, visitors of the sick and poor, or agents of the Strangers’ Friend and other useful societies.”

Thus Great Queen Street Chapel had become a focus of philanthropy, a rallying-point of evangelistic effort, and a broad base of operations in aggressive Christian work. It was the headquarters of the Strangers’ Friend Society, and of the humble, plodding “Community,” a true brotherhood for the visitation of workhouses and conducting of religious services therein.

Our most popular and one of our most efficient class-leaders at Great Queen Street was Mr Child. Any member of the Queen Street Society, if asked to name the most typical, full-blown Methodist amongst them, would have answered, *Brother Child*. He was a genuine product of Yorkshire Methodism, and had brought with him to London all the fire and force, the methodical, calculable, trusty working power of West Riding Methodism. Of the simplest manners, living well within his means, and blessed with a like-minded Methodist wife, he could afford to be one of our most free-handed and most cheerful givers. Our foremost revivalist, and with the readiest and most resourceful initiative in evangelistic enterprise, he was at the same time our closest theological thinker. He had Butler at his fingers’ ends. He was our chief counsellor on the Tract Committee. His favourite principle was that *a tract should attract*.

He and my predecessor, the Rev. R. M. Willcox, who lived in Holborn, carried on a very laborious and disheartening mission in the narrow streets and lanes and “Rents” and

'Buildings' which wound like intestines between Holborn and Fleet Street, and between Chancery Lane and Snow Hill, a great part of which was happily cleared away on the formation of the fine ranges of building where the City Temple stands. Child expressed to me his strong conviction that female mission agency could alone cope with this abandoned population.

One day he took me to see some of the superb Corinthian capitals he was then executing. On my expressing enthusiastic admiration, he turned to me, and with a quiet significance observed, "And the best of it is that, however florid a capital may be, it not only crowns a column, but supports something." That read me a lesson in the preparation of my sermons.

On the breaking out of the disastrous conflict of 1849 Child joined the "Reform Movement," throwing into it all his constitutional energy and enthusiasm, and inevitably became the leader of the party in the circuit in 1850. I was then at Rochester, and Mr Arthur, located at the Second London, was invited to open our first chapel at New Brompton. He replied that they would be "in the thick of" the very heavy ticket-giving, and his superintendent, Mr Lomas, thought it would be highly inexpedient in the then excited state of things to make any change in the arrangements; but if I could come up and meet Mr Child's week-night class all would be right. This of course I was most forward to do.

I never witnessed anything more painful than the Great Queen Street March Quarterly Meeting of 1847. The large room was so crowded and opinion so opposed that there was the utmost difficulty in counting the successive and most dubious votes. Yet, for propriety and alertness, I cannot imagine any chairman of a church meeting surpassing Dr Beaumont. No one could be more observant of the maxim in the "Liverpool Minutes" —not to act "as the mere chairman of a meeting"; he bore himself throughout with all the firmness, forbearance, impartiality, considerateness, and tenderness of a genuine Christian presbyter. Though himself subjected to the shrewdest animadversion as to his neglect of the second place in the circuit, King's Cross, with a Society and congregation nearly double that of many circuit towns, yet he would not allow the complainant Society and Chapel Steward to be interrupted for a moment, maintaining, "Mr —— is perfectly in order, and has kept well within his rights." Himself the Great Interrupted in

discussion, he never interrupted others, or permitted interruption in his own interests.

The longest Quarterly Meeting I had ever known had been closed by half-past nine at latest ; but this did not end till a quarter to two the next morning, and it was half-past two before I could reach my house at Kentish Town, to find my young wife standing at the open door straining her eyes and ears for the sight of her husband's form or the sound of her husband's footstep. A strange interlude served only to intensify the excitement. At the crisis of the debate in stalked no less important a personage than the President of the Conference, who was no less redoubtable a personality than the Rev. William Atherton. What this tall, grim-visaged apparition might portend no one could tell, although some of us were aware that the anti-Beaumont party had laid their case before the President and had enlisted his strong sympathy on their side. Doubtless the surprise had been arranged. But Dr Beaumont at once rose to his feet and to the occasion, and with quiet dignity and courtesy expressed his personal pleasure in welcoming his own late superintendent, and the gratification of the Quarterly Meeting at the reappearance in that room of an esteemed former minister, who for three years had occupied the chair which it was now his own responsibility to fill. The favour was all the more to be appreciated on account of their distinguished visitant's preoccupation as President of the Conference and Chairman of the District, since it could form no part of his duty, either in the one office or the other, to pay them this unsolicited and not fore-announced attention. If *Mr Atherton*, as a beloved and former minister, had "any word of exhortation" or encouragement "for the people," he hoped he would at once "say on"; but no one must allow the presence of the President of the Conference and the Chairman of the District to influence the freedom of discussion on the course of business in the slightest degree. The President at once felt himself to be in a false position.

One of our liveliest and most interesting Leaders was Brother Day, a master chimney-sweep. Judging from his countenance, gait, tone, bearing, one would have thought that the vocation of a chimney-sweep was the cheeriest of all mortal callings. He was the life and soul of a lovefeast, and proved by his apt quotations of the sermons he had lately

heard what a responsive and retentive listener he had been. During the prayers, even at the administration of the Lord's Supper, he would keep up a running comment, audible only within a small area, which sometimes put a new meaning on the phraseology. Once as I was reading the words in the *Order for the Administration of the Lord's Supper*, "whose *property* is always to have mercy," Brother Day, who was kneeling near, broke out in a very articulate and audible underbreath: "Yes; that's *Thy* property, that's *Thy* riches, that's *Thy estate*, 'always to have mercy.'"

Brother Day was the brightest contrast to the ideal "master-sweep" so powerfully portrayed by Kingsley in his wonderful "Water-Babies"—the gruff, brutal "Grimes." Day's name was descriptive of his renewed nature—bright, beaming, cheery, radiant, and pleasant to behold. Though not at all badly off, his richest "property" was "mercy." It sat "enthroned" in his heart as "in the hearts of kings." And in his case, too, "the *quality* of mercy was not strained." With him all was spontaneity. His shrewd, practical humour shot a gleam of daylight across our Church discussions. Etty, whilst engaged on one of his fine pictures, writes: "My picture must *taste* of the morning sun. My figures will have to be lit by it." And Day's sayings had a smack of morning sunlight in them. The Irish salutation, "The top of the morning to you," was realised by Brother Day, whose matutinal avocations, though they had to do with soot, yet familiarised him with objects as seen in the clear, bright, "smokeless air."

Brother Day, being "a man diligent in his business," rose high in his vocation. He did "not stand before mean men," but attained to the almost imperial function of having charge of the flues of the Houses of Parliament. This, no doubt, he owed partly to the philanthropic element in his mode of conducting business. In my own young days the sufferings of the "climbing boy," described by Kingsley so affectingly, were amongst the commonplaces of philanthropy. Montgomery's "Climbing Boy," beginning

"Who knows the climbing boy? who cares
If well or ill I be?"

is one of the lyric gems of that humanitarian poet. Mr Day, by the employment of *machine-sweeping* had greatly softened

the hardships of the little sweep. In a side street in the centre of the metropolis, just off one of its greatest thoroughfares, the premises of this tender-hearted master-sweep were made conspicuous by an arresting work of art on an imposing scale, the product of the paint-brush of some colourist unknown to fame, some inglorious Veronese. This masterpiece of sign-painting set forth, with strong chromatic emphasis, the philanthropic merits of the new system as contrasted with the old.¹ Mr Day's responsibilities in connexion with the Houses of Parliament made him a familiar figure in the precincts and the passages, and occasioned a rencontre with Lord Palmerston, then prime minister, too characteristic of them both to be willingly let slip. During my three years' term in the Southampton Circuit, within the bounds of which Lord Palmerston resided throughout life, but few things pleased the genial politician so much as a crack with any one in any station who manifested the shrewdness, the sound sense, the straightforwardness, and the good-natured humour to which he was so much beholden both in administration and debate. He never forgot the fact that, though on his father's side he came of the ancient aristocracy, yet on the mother's he was a man of the people, she having been a tradesman's daughter.

Lord Palmerston met Day in one of the lobbies of the House of Commons, and would not let him pass with a mere salaam on the one side and nod on the other. He stopped, and with his own frank heartiness, congratulated Day on the lightness of his duties and the fewness of his working hours as compared with his own. "Lord Palmerston," said the class-leader, always on the alert to give to conversation a religious turn, "I pray for you every day of my life." "I thank you, Day," said he; "I believe in prayer." Thereupon Day expressed a wish that he could pray *with* him as well as for him. Said the premier, "Well, come with me." He led him to a private room, locked the door, and knelt with bowed head, whilst the master chimney-sweep poured forth his soul with his own childlike, manly simplicity and earnestness, invoking the divine blessing on the heavy-laden statesman. When they rose Lord Palmerston thanked him warmly, and said: "I have had many a bishop as my guest, but you

¹ The originator of the new system was another member of our Great Queen Street Society, Mr Robinson, of Southampton Street, Strand.

are the first man that has ever prayed with me and for me *personally*."

This is in perfect keeping with what I used to hear of Palmerston when I was stationed in Southampton. During the whole three years, a keen-witted, simple-minded Derbyshire Methodist, Smith from Ashover, was employed in draining Lord Palmerston's estate, which being situate near *Romsey in the Mud* was in sore need of that process. Smith could always get a subscription from his lordship for any local Methodist object, although at *that* time, considering the requirements of his position, he had enough to do to maintain the financial equilibrium.

In 1851, when Palmerston was the energetic and commanding Foreign Secretary, the Southampton Methodists, in order to reduce the debt on their beautiful new chapel, projected a lecture by the Rev. W. M. Punshon, with Lord Palmerston in the chair. Some of the leading Methodists of Southampton were prominent Liberals, and a deputation including these gentlemen drove over to Broadlands to request the popular Minister of State to confer on us this favour. In 1851 the brilliant young Methodist orator and elocutionist was but little known in the south outside the pale of Methodism. The deputation was received with Lord Palmerston's almost overdone complacency, but when the name of the lecturer was mentioned, the incorrigible punster exclaimed, "*Punshon!* What a *rum* name for a Methodist minister!" He assured the deputation that it would have been to him a real gratification to accede to their request, but that his present position put it quite out of his power to do so. If he took the chair at a public meeting in the interests of one denomination, he would commit himself to render the like service to every other denomination, especially to the High Church party in the Establishment (with which he had no sympathy whatever), and this involved a drain upon his time which he could not possibly afford, our foreign policy being then in the most anxious and complicated state.

Other notabilities of the Great Queen Street Circuit are sketched in my father's articles on "Mid-London Methodism Fifty Years Ago," and in his reminiscences of the family of the Right Hon. W. H. Smith, who were, with the families of two

of his brothers-in-law, regular attendants at the Great Queen Street church, and mostly members of its Society. There too, he met the young poetess, Emma Tatham, whose memoir was the first volume that he wrote. References in his *Sidelights*, and some letters of this period, show that, despite his bearing more than his share of the ordinary work of the Circuit, he was diligent in pastoral visitation, especially amongst the poor, and that he did not confine the latter labours to those connected with his own communion. Dr Rigg and others have testified that never did his preaching exceed in intellectual brilliance and spiritual power the sermons delivered during the three years at Great Queen Street. Beyond all question his excessive exertions at that time constituted one main cause of the physical weakness which troubled and hampered him for the rest of his life.

By the Conference of 1847 Benjamin Gregory was appointed to Hull (Waltham Street). On account of the damp climate, which suited neither his young wife's health nor his own, he remained here only a single year. The brief ministry produced a vivid and abiding impression. Visiting Hull more than twenty years after its close, I was surprised at the number of people who spoke of benefit received under it, of the powerful influence it had begun to exert even upon those outside Methodism, of their recollection of particular sermons and services.

A few extracts from my father's sketches may be given:—

"Just below the pulpit was the preacher's pew, from which looked up the rosy, healthy, happy face of Mrs Fowler, and the keen-eyed and interrogating physiognomy of the acute law-student, now Sir Henry H. Fowler. Hard by sat the tall and dominating personality of Charles Welch, the schoolmaster and famous controversialist and local preacher. In close propinquity to the pulpit sat the venerable William Morley, grandsire of the great pulpit orator and still greater platform orator, William Morley Punshon. Old William Morley's face and figure seemed an admirable duplicate of some stiffly and quaintly rimmed engraving of a preacher of the Gospel in the old *Arminian Magazine*.

"Another eye-arresting figure near the pulpit was that of an old gentleman, who bore, and not unworthily, the name of Baron. He and his little grandchild formed a pleasing picture of placid, kindly age and eager unfolding girlhood. I took a special interest in the little lady with the solemn, wondering eyes, and the thoughtful, sensitive, though rosy countenance, as the daughter of a man whose theologic monographs and literary 'remains' I had been studying with in-

tensest interest—the lamented Richard Treffry, jun. A quarter of a century later it was my mournful privilege to watch the ripe perfection of those Christian graces which I had gazed on so admiringly in the bud. She became the wife of the Rev. W. R. C. Cockill, and was my near neighbour at Stoke Newington, when her husband was stationed in that Circuit, during which period she was transplanted to the heavenly paradise. From the quiet home where Richard Treffry found a bride so worthy of himself, there also came the wife of the sweet-spirited capable John Hay, that of the large-hearted and eloquent Edward Corderoy, and that of the enterprising Edward Stephens, one of the first colonists of South Australia, who settled on the site of Adelaide before the town was built.

“Edward Stephens, when very young, obtained a clerkship in the Hull Banking Company, and was but twenty-five years old when he went out to create and conduct a banking business in an entirely new settlement. The *Bankers' Magazine* claims for the company of which Edward Stephens was the first and foremost agent the honour of being the fathers of Australian banking. The earliest representative of the imposing structures which now adorn the cities of Australia was the canvas-covered sandhill which did duty for a desk to Edward Stephens.

“We were both members of the committee of the Port of Hull Society. Our meetings were ordinarily full dress debates, contentious questions often cropping up. The new school and the old school were struggling for the mastery. The antagonistic leaders were the two congregational ministers of the town. The old had a very sturdy, able representative in the Rev. Thomas Stratten.¹ The new was led with dash and determination by an already popular preacher and writer, who had come as its first minister to the handsome Albion Chapel as his own first charge. He was popularly spoken of by the expressive name of *New Man 'All* (the initial H being omitted as superfluous).

“On one old gentleman I was wont to look with a respect that bordered upon reverence, Mr Robert Garbutt, merchant, with whom the reader of the *Life of Richard Watson* becomes so pleasantly familiar. Two-and-twenty years had passed since the date of Watson's latest letter to his friend, and the light of other days seemed to flicker pensively across those dignified, expressive features. Near him sat Mrs Atkinson, with her tall, thin son, Henry John, then still a minor. His large, square, well-moulded brow, his shapely, cogitative nose, the almost supernatural whiteness of his features, and the tension of his facial muscles gave token of the capacity and force of character which were so soon to rise into eminence in his native town and his Mother Church.² On the other side of the chapel we had the well filled pew of Dr Sandwith, including the future ‘hero of Kars.’ In the gallery on the preacher's right sat the family of the Krügers, two brothers and

¹ Author of a small but able book on Apostolical Succession.

² Subsequently M.P. for several years.

a sister. Their father was the Lutheran minister in Hull, but their mother was a Methodist. Captain John Krüger was a prodigious favourite in his native town, and seemed almost a part of its very definition.

"Captain Krüger's long experience and his reputation as a Baltic captain determined the choice of him by the Government for a position of high importance on the outbreak of the Crimean war, which brought him into frequent contact with Sir Charles Napier. The free indulgence of that officer in the irreligious language which formed so large a part of the nautical vocabulary during the early part of his career was notorious. These profanities were more than the Methodist could quietly put up with. He took an opportunity of remonstrating with the admiral upon the subject, whereat the latter took such huge offence as to order him into a lower position than that which he had accepted from the Admiralty. This Captain Krüger definitely refused to take, so the conqueror of Acre found himself as powerless to reduce the conscientious captain as to capture Cronstadt, and was obliged to set a watch over the door of his lips whilst he was within earshot of the Methodist.

"At Great Thornton Street, my special charge, there were Mrs Pope and her bright boys—one of them President of the Conference in 1893. Nor must I forget the Langs, one of whom has achieved celebrity as a journalist and *littérateur*. Mr Andrew Lang has acknowledged gratefully his indebtedness to his Methodist home training, and to the earnest ministrations at Waltham Street.

"One Sunday evening, after I had been preaching at a crowded prayer-meeting, young John Holmes was beheld prostrate at the penitent bench in an agony of supplication. A few years later he became a minister, and manifested the genuine Yorkshire evangelistic ardour. Many a stout-hearted sinner has his preaching brought to his knees in 'Sacred grief and penitential pain.'"

It is perhaps worth mention that Benjamin Gregory's first appearance in print occurred during the Hull period. He consented to publish a lecture delivered before the Young Men's Christian Association on the "Origin of Idolatry." In the innocence of his heart, and to the annoyance of the Association, which itself desired to publish the lecture, he buried it in the pages of the *Youth's Instructor*—a periodical often referred to in the earlier Recollections.

CHAPTER II

ROCHESTER—SOUTHAMPTON—BARNSELY

BENJAMIN GREGORY'S next station was St George's-in-the-east, London. The year spent there was one of continuous ill-health. Despite strenuous and exhausting effort less than half the necessary work could be accomplished. The Circuit dealt generously and kindly with the zealous but physically feeble young preacher, providing clerical assistance, insisting upon long holidays, content if he could, at intervals, take the pulpit once on a Sunday. By the close of the year his health was fairly re-established, but the doctors declared that removal to country air was imperative. The Conference of 1848 appointed him to Rochester.

Whilst he was stationed in the east of London, the disastrous Methodist Reform movement began. The reader unacquainted with its origin and progress must be referred to ordinary histories of Methodism, and especially to my father's *Sidelights*. The expulsion of Messrs Dunn, Everett and Griffith on the practical charge of the anonymous production and circulation of gross libels against their brethren in the ministry, and of the secret authorship of the *Fly-Sheets*, roused a tempest of indignation and fury that shook Methodism to its foundations. The guilt or innocence of the expelled ministers was not the main question. It was thought that the Conference had acted if not unconstitutionally, yet in a tyrannous and high-handed fashion. The power of the Conference, the authority of ministers, the rights of laymen, the adjustment of Methodism to new needs and conditions were the real matters in dispute. All this might have been settled and arranged with comparatively small difficulty and cost, if it had not been for the passionate excitement aroused. My concern, however, is only with my father's views and actions. Very shortly after the expulsion he left St George's. All he could do there was to urge moderation on both sides, and to warn his then

colleagues of the fatal results that must follow unconciliatory and hasty behaviour.¹ At Rochester he soon found himself in the thick of the fight.

In his *Sidelights* my father gives a detailed history of the Reform movement in the Rochester and the Southampton Circuits. Mainly this twofold account consists of personal reminiscences. For space' sake we cannot quote from these at any length. Letters to the Rev. T. S. Gregory exhibit the impression made at the time :—

"Feb. 6, 1850.—The Rochester Society is unhappily in a state of great dissatisfaction with the late *Declaration*² which has exasperated them to madness. I have not signed it, because I foresee that if the Conference abide by it we shall lose at least 60,000 members. But *I am sure* it will not be adhered to. I am sure that some concession will be made, and therefore do not choose to put my name to a document the issuing of which will be a matter of regret to all lovers of Methodism. Keep as *quiet* as you can. Read neither *Watchman* nor *Wesleyan*; stick to your work. The advice I give I take."

"LONDON, Aug. 1st.—My attendance upon the Conference has been very brief. I have to fulfil my appointments in my own Circuit. It was confidently expected that Mr Fowler would have obtained the Chair on account of the fact that both Dr Beecham and Dr Hannah were candidates for that honour [strictly speaking candidates for the Presidency are unknown to Wesleyan Methodism], but on the day preceding the election the partisans of the two last mentioned ministers met at the White Hart, and Dr H. agreed to resign in favour of Dr B. . . . Bromley is expelled without appeal, only twenty-four voting that he be allowed *as a favour* to explain himself to the Conference. You need be under no apprehension as regards the *Rochester* preachers, as two-thirds of the Conference are in the same fix, *i.e.* the not having rigidly enforced our discipline upon the dissatisfied. I am personally under no perturbation on the subject. Mr M'Donald is quite taking a public position on the Popular side in the Conference. Last evening's debate was the most important of the whole so far. Mr —— has refused a ticket to Mr Savage,³ a local preacher (an old school-fellow of mine). Savage demanded a ticket or a trial. Mr —— refused either. The whole of last evening was

¹ See *Sidelights*. Cheap edition, pp. 461 ff.

² A Declaration of adhesion to existing modes of government, strongly condemnatory of the Reformers. It was issued nominally as a private document, but was signed by all the ministers except four or five, and was subsequently printed in the *Minutes of the Conference*.

³ Still (1901), I believe, surviving as the Rev. William Savage, M.D. He has spent the greater part of an industrious life as missionary to the Indians on the Canadian reserves. See *Sidelights*, pp. 472-3.

occupied in the discussion of that point. At last it was determined unanimously that Mr ——— must give Mr S. his trial. This is a most important decision, and will have a pacificatory effect. I mix with the utmost freedom with the extreme *Watchman* partisans. The answer to the illegal Memorialists was *very courteous*, as much so as I would have made it."

"*April 1.*—Death has been busy amongst us since you left—two more men of mark have fallen, Alexander Bell and *Joseph Fowler*! The latter is to me personally and to Methodism generally a great loss. His death was one of the most triumphant on record. William Bunting was with him several hours before his death, and told me it was without exception the most triumphant departure he ever witnessed. No doubt his days were shortened by anxiety, as the stress of disease which overcame him was comparatively light. He may be said to have died of exhaustion. Wm. Bunting says 'he *ignored* death.' I had seen him about a fortnight before. He had then no apprehensions of his approaching dissolution. We had some private conversation on the affairs of Methodism. He thought that the Conference would be compelled to take a lower tone by pecuniary difficulties. I was invited to attend his funeral as a personal friend. He was of course interred at City Road, close to his own dwelling. The President, Dr Bunting, and Mr Lomas, preceded the corpse. Then followed his relatives, after whom walked William Bunting and George Steward and Benjamin Gregory as personal friends. West (Francis A.) could not come up then as he comes to preach the funeral sermon. I was requested to prepare a brief biographical sketch and estimate of his character for the *Watchman*. They only applied on Saturday last, and I was obliged to send it yesterday noon, so that it was written in great haste.

"... Rule is nominated for the editorship. His views are the most extreme of any man I have ever met with. I had a tremendous debate with him in company the other night in which he maintained the impossibility of an *educated* Roman Catholic reaching heaven. He excluded by name Pascal, Fénelon, De Renty, Kempis. He said 'Mr Wesley did more harm by publishing Thomas à Kempis' Christian Pattern than all his (Mr W's.) works will ever do good.' ... He said to a friend of mine, 'If we were to tell the people plainly all the authority with which Christ has invested us they would *hoot* us.' He is, however, to be editor. To my great surprise a friend in Birmingham told me that he had seen a letter from Rule in which he speaks of me in very high terms, only adding that I have the misfortune to be reputed a 'sympathiser.' ... I was at Canterbury last week at a great educational meeting. I met Mr John Scott. He was quite *chumified*, not the slightest semblance of coldness. I am applied to to write an inscription for Fowler's tomb. ... I have proceeded with my expositions of the Psalms, excepting on Easter Sunday, when of course I took a topic suited to the solemnity. I have been a pilgrimage to Bishops' Bourne, the residence of the great

Hooker, and his place of death and burial which was highly interesting to me, and I trust profitable, as impressing upon me the tranquil life and truly christian death of that holy man.

"As to Methodist matters, I see that men of my convictions must *bide their time*, and wait till experience and the gradual progress of enlightenment have produced a better state of feeling amongst us. But *meanwhile* what mischiefs are spreading! what a loss of numbers! of the piety of the residue! of public character! what a degradation of the brotherhood and consequently of the people! But *go thou* on thy way, for thou shalt rest and stand in thy lot at the end of the days! O Theo, let us live only to Christ. As Chalmers says, 'What impressive mockery is stamped on everything else! Fight the good fight of faith; lay hold on eternal life.'"

"ROCHESTER, *December 10th.*—I refused a ticket last night to the principal man at —, the proprietor altogether of far the greater part of the chapel there, and the chapel-steward. It was done in a very quiet way. I reasoned him out of a bad temper into a good one, and although I cut him off, we shook hands afterwards, and were very good friends. I also left off another person the same evening, so that you see *I* am beginning the hard work. This day week I had to meet the two classes at — which contain all the violent men. They were very hot and I was very cool, but I gave them fair notice that we should make them *keep* law or *feel* law. We shall have to go through the *processes* with — as he is a Leader and demands trial before expulsion. Some of the men will, they say, go with him, but the Rochester people call him *stupid*, and abandon him to his fate. Get to know by all means what course Mr Lomas is taking with the non-payers at Great Queen Street, and let me know immediately. Happily we have very few, and these all occur in classes which I have to meet. I shall act like —, 'firmly but mildly.'"

"NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE, *July 31.*—I write in the midst of Conference . . . I am down for Southampton, but all is most uncertain. I am invited to Barnsley, and Sam Waddy states his determination to get me put down for Sheffield. But I have this morning done what will no doubt effectually prevent my being appointed anywhere but in a very secluded position. A letter from the delegates has been read and a debate ensued. Beaumont earnestly entreated that their request for a Committee being appointed to meet a Committee of themselves might be acceded to. Only *five* voted in favour of Beaumont's motion, of whom I was one. The indignation of the Conference was extreme. Thomas Jackson said he should like to know who those men were. The President requested us to hold up our hands once more. We did so. He then requested us to stand up that we might be known. Steward successfully objected to this although he did not vote.

"Inglis *spoke* in favour of Beaumont's proposal. We are looked on as *traitors*. The tone of the Conference is higher than ever. I

was the only man in the body of the chapel who voted on the liberal side. It makes one feel important to find one's self *a fifth part* of the entire liberalism of the Wesleyan Conference. I was the only man who cheered Beaumont."

"ROCHESTER, Sept. 1.—I enjoyed my Conference trip very much amidst all annoyances and discouragements. The notorious *five* were treated by the platform with consummate insolence. T. Jackson refused to shake hands with L—— amidst a company of preachers, saying, 'No, there are you and five or six of you betraying the cause of my Redeemer.' T. J., however, gave me his hand, but accompanied the courtesy by an expression of bitter regret at my having taken *such* a side."¹

There is a most flattering portraiture of me in the second volume of the *Takings*, which has just come out.²

"WINCHESTER, Sept. 30th, 1851.³— . . . We had our Financial District Meeting at Southampton last week. . . . Some of the brethren in their prayers and speeches spoke of the Reform party as on their way to hell, dooming them to the devil without hesitation or remorse. I took the opportunity of objecting to such language. After abjuring all approval of the *proceedings* of the Reformers, I declared all slander, clamour, bitterness and violence of language, and attempts to carry Church measures by brute force as utterly unchristian, whatever *opinions* might be advanced by such means. J—— S—— said he would rather be a drunkard than a Reformer. I said, You set our bye-laws above the laws of God. I asked with what force we

¹ [In extreme old age Thomas Jackson putting his hand on my head gave me his blessing, and added words of the highest appreciation of my father's character, ministry and loyalty to Methodism.—J. R. G.]

² "BENJAMIN GREGORY: Tall—thin—prominent features—long hair. The general English hue—the air and appearance of a scholar, mingling with society, and enjoying enlightened conversation, as well as the seclusion and profounder thought of the study. A fine intellect; great originality; a good classical scholar. Remote from everything stiff, stilted and systematic. Order, without its appearance; ease without carelessness or negligence. Large liberal views. Both the logician and the genius perceptible. Mild, gentle, deep-toned feeling; blended with spirit and point. A chaste, clear, clean, manly style. Neither rapid nor slow in delivery; an excellent power for the character of thought in which he indulges, and in which he deals. While he respects rule, and obeys law, he does not forget his independence. Would be an awkward subject to buy. Possesses that genius which is described by Sir Joshua Reynolds as comprising a 'power of producing excellences, which are out of the reach of human art; a power which no precepts can teach, and which no industry can acquire.' Stands apart from all commonplace; reminding us of the sentiment of a German writer who says, 'The proportion of genius to the vulgar is like one to a million'; adding, 'But genius without tyranny, without pretension—that judges the weak with equity, the superior with humanity, and equals with justice—is like one to ten millions.' Can give spirit to a whole sentence by a single expression—a feeling to an entire assembly by a single thought."

³ It is convenient to take here letters about the agitation though written after the removal to Southampton.

could declaim against the slanders and malignity of the other party if we breathed the same spirit and spoke the same dialect. . . . After about an hour-and-a-half's debate, on my quoting the passage, 'Michael the archangel contending with Satan,' etc., they gave in and acknowledged I was right. Some who did not join in the debate spoke to me in private, expressing their satisfaction that such expressions had not passed without rebuke. Dr Bunting was down here the other day. I called upon him. He was *extremely* friendly, and spoke with the utmost confidence on all sorts of matters. He has none of the littleness of his party. . . . I am prodigiously popular with the Reformers. When I rose to speak at Salisbury some of them rose from their seats and saluted me with violent applause. *They were silent when I sat down.* I have taken care in this Circuit and in Salisbury to disclaim in *public* all sympathy with the *proceedings* of that party." . . .

"Feb. 14th, 1852.—Steward wrote a very kind letter to me asking for a statement of my views, which I sent him at some length. James H. Rigg called on me on his way from Guernsey to the Meeting. I was astounded at the coincidence of his views and mine. What I principally urged to Steward was (1) that officials should be limited to the duties of their respective offices. (2) The making of the Quarterly Meeting in June the Memorial Meeting, as you give the privilege of expressing assent or dissent to your laws to the September Quarterly Meeting. (3) The formation of a mixed Court of Appeal from the decisions of the Leaders' Meeting. (4) The free *election* of the members of our Connexional Committees, that they be representative and composed of two-thirds laymen. (5) Conference open to office-bearers in the church (of course as spectators merely, excepting in delicate cases)." ¹

It may be convenient here to summarise briefly my father's attitude towards the Methodist Reform movement. Distinct statements in the letters, their whole tone as well as particular allusions, the description of the effect of his speech at the Salisbury meeting, his own refusal of tickets to obstinate rule-breakers, show that he had no sympathy whatever with *the methods* of the dissentients, especially in their later developments. It is equally obvious that he disapproved of the temper of the leaders whom he calls collectively "the platform"; that he thought some of the demands of the Reformers just intrinsically, and others expedient to be granted; that he believed the rigid enforcement of bye-laws to be in the circumstances not only impolitic and harsh but actually unchristian, inconsistent at least with the forbearance that pastors should

¹ Of these suggestions No. 2 has been adopted; No. 4 except that the number of clerical and lay members is equal; No. 5 during the sittings of the Mixed Conference.

exercise towards their flock. But the very fact that he remained in the old body, rejoiced in and wrought for its conservation and extension, shows that, on the main principles, he held Wesleyan Methodism to have warranty of Holy Scripture, and to be consistent with the reason of the thing. Unless this were so, he could never have pursued the temperate yet uncompromising defence of the Conference position contained in his *Catechism of Methodist Polity and History*. True, this was, in some sort, an official publication of the Conference, and was considered, line by line, by a carefully selected committee; but no pressure would have induced him to write that which was contrary to his genuine convictions. But if the *Handbook* must be regarded in any way as a putting of the case for the Conference, the *Sidelights*, though distributing blame more liberally and impartially, leaves the same impression; on the whole:—the Conference might have acted less sharply and sternly, individual leaders manifested regrettable passion and unfairness; nevertheless on the substance of the dispute judgement must be given in their favour. There is no question that, at that time, my father belonged to the Liberal party in Methodism, and that, on the points then in dispute, he never changed his opinion. Strong and influential as were his views on ecclesiastical polity and administration, I doubt if these were the mainsprings of his speech and action during the agitation. He calls his own conduct “the policy of preservation.” His dominant motive was desire to preserve her members to the Church. He mourned over the wreck of circuits, the loss of members, the spiritual mischief occasioned by the heated warfare. To keep within the fold those whom Christ had committed to Methodism, he thought no sacrifice too great, except that of essential principle; the humiliating appearance of surrender was small dust in the balance compared to the cure of souls, or even the prosperity of the Church itself. He notes sadly that of the 100,000 members who seceded only 40,000 joined the secessional Societies, three-fifths were lost to Methodism, and only too probably to the visible Church. Whether or no it would have been possible wholly to prevent the disruption, whether or no the centrifugal forces of fundamental divergence of principle and aim would have been too powerful for any practicable concessions to outweigh, at least much of the ruin might have been avoided, the long-lasting,

bitter and burning animosities need hardly have arisen. This, at the present time, very few doubt.

One further point must be noticed. My father suffered little or none of that *sæva indignatio* with which "the platform" visited the few ministers who acted and spoke as he did. Friendship and kindness were scarcely interrupted. The Methodist leaders not merely respected his honesty of intellect and purpose, they trusted his loving loyalty to Methodism; they desired to retain his services for the Church; they made willing allowance for opinions which they regarded in his case as the temporary aberrations of genius.

Nevertheless the Reform disturbances were the cause of my father's leaving Rochester at the end of two years. Despite his partial sympathy with the Reformers, he had not incurred the displeasure of the loyal majority. This his subsequent relations with the Rochester Circuit showed; and the address presented to him on his removal speaks of his manly and independent conduct, although the bulk of the subscribers were Conference men. His refusal of the third year's invitation was no cowardly shrinking from a difficult position. Partly it was due to the fact that the diminished ministerial staff would render the work beyond his physical competence; partly to the fear that his continual presence in the Circuit might interfere with the new superintendent's freedom, and partly to a cause which can only be glanced at. Rightly or wrongly—in later years my father thought the latter—he believed that he had become so "suspect" to the Connexional authorities that his presence in a Circuit greatly agitated by the Reform might easily be misunderstood by both sides. Prudence counselled withdrawal to the quietest possible sphere. Nor was this all, he himself contemplated the possibility of resignation of his ministry, lest he should be involved in proceedings to which conscientiously he objected. An engagement with Rochester might have left him open to a charge of want of straightforwardness. The Southampton letters will further explain his opinions.

We may now return to the Rochester period. All the available information not published in *Sidelights* or in *Consecrated Culture*¹ is contained in letters to the Rev. T. S.

¹ *Memorials of Benjamin Alfred Gregory*. The subject of the memoir was born in Rochester.

Gregory. Except those already cited from, these relate to family matters (of little or no interest save to the family), books and study, and religious experience. Subjoined are a few brief extracts :—

"I am labouring at my Psalms with great delight and satisfaction. I am now reading Hamilton on *Rewards and Punishments*. The style has all Hamilton's atrocious mannerisms—his pomp and pedantry. His argumentation is not pellucid. The stream is limpid; the reaches are so short and so broken with waterfalls as to be sometimes almost unnavigable. He darkly discerns the true philosophy, but it is not palpable to his own eye, and of course not to his readers. All these strictures refer to the first lecture, beyond which I have not attained. I have been studying Æschylus and Sophocles with reference to the acquiring deeper familiarity with the ancient poetry. I am now reading Tacitus.

". . . I am glad you have read *Watson's Exposition*. Read *Fletcher's Checks* as soon as you can. The theology of them is first-rate, and they are as interesting as a poem. I am giving two series of expositions: one on Sundays on the Romans, the other on week-evenings on the Ephesians. This is a work just to my taste, and very much augments my congregations.

"What overcompensates for every trial is I never in any former stage of my ministry felt such nearness to Christ, and so much of the blessedness of His gospel. I make the Bible my absorbing study. I have finished Stuart on the *Romans*, and have read the 1st Corinthians with Adam Clarke and the Tract Society's Commentary, and am now on the second. My opinion of Adam is greatly heightened. To be appreciated he must be read extensively. On some chapters in John, the Acts, and the Corinthians he is masterly.

". . . I find old Perkins (on the Galatians) very shrewd, keen and racy, but most pitiaibly mystified with Calvinism. I read a sermon of Sherlock's last week, that on 'For every idle word,' etc, and though I had read it repeatedly it seemed as fresh as ever. I am reading the second volume of Dr Chalmers' *Memoirs*, which also I find very quickening to my spiritual sensibilities and confirmatory of my evangelistic views. I have just now read with great delight and advantage Maitland's *Church in the Catacombs*."

"*July 1.*—The funereal aspect of this letter will prepare you for the sad and affecting but withal most joyous intelligence which it conveys. Our dear sister Sarah entered into rest in the *full triumph of faith* on Sunday, June 8th, at about half-past nine o'clock in the evening. Towards the close she said little else but 'An open heaven! An open heaven!' many times repeated. Her last words were 'Glory! Glory! Glory!' accompanied by an intense and supernatural radiance upon the countenance, expressive of ecstatic hope if not of ecstatic fruition. All the doubts and fears fled when the

great trial came. Mrs Harrison told me she had never witnessed 'anything near' such a triumphant death. She looked affectingly like herself in the coffin but much older, and I was greatly struck with the breadth and height of her brow."

In September, 1851, my father removed to Southampton. We are still dependent chiefly upon the letters to his brother, from which are culled the following extracts:—

"*November 29, 1851.*—I am this day thirty-one years of age, Ebenezer! I have cause for deep humiliation at my past unfaithfulness and sinfulness, but for intense gratitude and firm confidence. May the Lord help me to start afresh. I have visited the poet Keble, author of the *Christian Year*. I went to Hursley, five miles from Winchester, to visit the burial place of Richard Cromwell, and found that Keble was the rector of the parish, the church of which he has rendered one of the most beautiful in England with the proceeds of his works. I was determined to *get a gleg* of him. I therefore coolly marched up to the rectory and inquired for his reverence. He made his appearance and ushered me into his study, where we had a pleasant little tête-à-tête. He has a beautifully poetic countenance. His face is the symbol of his genius—mild, sweet, gentle, contemplative, and of marble whiteness. He is bashful to awkwardness. He was by far the more embarrassed. He is tall, and something between William Bunting and the portraits of Wordsworth. He was very cordial, and offered to serve me in any way in his power."

"*SOUTHAMPTON, Nov. 29.*— . . . We are in a high state of excitement in Southampton, on account of the landing of Kossuth here. I obtained admission to the banquet given to him in our Town Hall, and heard his speech. He is a consummate orator, and speaks English with exquisite taste and felicity. In this respect alone he is a prodigy, having learnt the language during his captivity by means of a Shakespeare, an English Dictionary, and an English Grammar—without a master of course. He has attained to a purity and power to which few natives ever aspire. His whole appearance and bearing impress us most favourably. I am glad the *Watchman* takes his side."

"*Feb. 14, 1852.*— . . . My New Year's letter was consumed in the *Amazon* which I saw half-way down Southampton Water, and the destruction of which has created an unprecedented sensation throughout Great Britain, but especially in Southampton. . . . I can only add that considerable apprehension was entertained with regard to her safety in Southampton; before she left many of her officers expressed great reluctance to entrust themselves on board of her. . . . I am wading through Adam's Exposition *upon* the 2nd Epistle of Peter, an enormous tome, 885 double columns, and closely printed paper. One finds many grains of gold amidst the mass of mud. 'Tis the same Adams who wrote *Majesty in Misery*.

" . . . We are expecting a hotly contested election here. I shall not exercise my franchise from prudential reasons. If obliged to vote I should give mine to the Tories, as I am disgusted with the selfishness of the Cobden party, and am convinced that the tendency of legislation at present is quite too much to the left.

"A great change has come over the Reformers. Kay has put the *Wesleyan Times* into the market. He asks for it £4000. A number of gentlemen are intending to buy it if they can secure an editor to their mind. I have received a letter on behalf of the anticipated proprietors offering *me* the editorship ! ! ! and declaring their intention to make the paper a very different affair. Of course I declined the honour.

"I have read some fifty pages of Isaac Taylor's book on Methodism. 'Tis a wise book so far as I have read excepting his queer explanation of 'Jeffrey.'¹ I have got Tennyson's *In Memoriam*, a psalm possessing prodigious excellences and monstrous defects. I am engaged to give two lectures here in the course of two or three weeks—one on 'Athens,' the other on 'Formation of Character.'

"Have you read the *Successful Merchant*? 'Tis in my opinion as to both composition and tendency a great lowering of Arthur. It ought to have been entitled 'The art of getting a camel through the eye of a needle.' Hartley Coleridge's *Posthumous Poems* which have not long since appeared are—some of them—especially the Sonnets, very genuine. I have at least been much pleased with them."

"*Nov.* 16.— . . . I am become a steadfast reader of the *Times*. The Southampton correspondent is one of our people and a neighbour. He sends me a copy every day, which I peruse with almost religious regularity. The Press tremendously batters the present ministry, and certainly they have laid themselves open to heavy strokes by their want of English frankness and that Pythian composition, the Queen's speech. I am reading a choice book, *Friends in Council*, by a Mr Helps. I'll give you a Sonnet I wrote the other day on visiting the tomb of Robert Pollock, of the *Course of Time*.² He is buried two miles from

¹ The Ghost at Epworth Parsonage.

² Pollok ! Retreating from the Northern blast
Whose mighty voice gave key-note to thy song,
Sublime and solemn, vehement and vast
With wailing interlude—now soft—now strong ;
Thou cam'st to lay thee down, by the fair flood
Which maketh glad Antona.* Thou hast found
Meet resting place. Thou sleep'st on hallow'd ground,
Soil sanctified by footsteps of the good !
What though they laid thee not amidst the crowd
Of crumbling Kings and Anakims of thought,
Princes whose vaunted wisdom comes to nought,
With sombre pageantry and anthems proud !
Here Watt's pensive pace hath press'd the sod,
Here Cowper's heart first felt the Peace of God.

* The poetic name of Southampton.

this at the pretty village churchyard of Millbrook higher up the Southampton Water, hard by Freemantle, where Cowper first got liberty. You must remember that Southampton is the birthplace and favourite resort of Isaac Watts. I am reading devotionally for the third or fourth time, and with greater interest and profit than ever, Howe's *Blessedness of the Righteous*."

"June 16.—On Thursday last a central meeting for this district was held here in connection with the great Methodist Financial Movement. There are to be Circuit meetings in all the towns. I was chosen as Deputation to all the places except Chichester and Salisbury. I was much affected by the statement made by one of the four years' men in narrating his experience at the district meeting, Jonathan Dent, a very popular man, that he was converted under my preaching, when I was a local preacher."

"July 16.—So we are to have a *Review*.¹ Most people here think it means a naval and military pageant. I have consented to be one of the writers. Dr M'Nicoll of Liverpool, and Francis A. West, wrote to me about it, so I presume it originated in that neighbourhood. There is a good deal of excitement about Eastern affairs, but I do not anticipate any collision. We have a grand fleet at Spithead. *The Duke of Wellington*, a steamer—screw—carrying 131 guns, is the largest in the British Navy.

"Next Wednesday is set apart in Southampton as a day of prayer, touching the prospects of cholera. There are to be services in all the churches, and two united prayer meetings in the morning at our chapel.

"The degradation of Professor Maurice is one of the most exciting things in the Church just now. He is one of the very ablest churchmen of the day, and one of the leaders of the Broad Church party. He deserved his fate.

"We have been kept in a state of excitement for the last three or four weeks by the preparations for war. We had a grand embarkation of troops on board the large steamers *Bengal*² and *Ripon* and the smaller boat *Manilla*—the Coldstream Guards in the first and the Grenadier Guards in the two latter. It was an exciting and affecting spectacle. I conversed with several of the men; they seemed grave, but convinced of the necessity of war. Three days afterwards I saw the Sappers and Miners and the Rifles embark in the *monster* ship *Himalaya*, the largest of all. I tried to get to speak to the Sappers on board, as I knew some of them at Chatham, but was not allowed. Charley Napier has kept us on the *qui vive* by a perpetual

¹ Now the *London Quarterly Review*.

² [My father and I—a mere child—witnessed the actual embarkation and the only accident I believe that occurred in the process: an officer leaped from a moving vessel—I think the *Bengal*—struck his knee against the curb of the dock, and broke his leg.]

roar of artillery in gun practice. He went off with the Baltic fleet from Spithead Saturday last.

"... I had a grand musical treat on Whitsunday, hearing Dr Wesley—Charles Wesley's grandson—play his own anthem, 'The Wilderness and the Solitary Place,' etc., in Winchester Cathedral."

"August 1.—I am sorry that you are, or rather *have been*, declining in your studious habits. I am quite clear that neither you nor I can be effective and *hearty* ministers without continuous study of the Holy Scriptures. I am thankful to say it is my daily delight. I have read lately some first-rate works, and my mind and heart are consciously expanded and improved. I have written on the average one new sermon a week ever since last Conference. 'Tis a work that makes my heart rejoice, and fills the circle of my days. I feel that I love Christ as I never did since my school, or at all events, my Grove days. I have, thank God, a more tender and intimate realization of His Person and work than for many years past. This is due, through the Holy Spirit, to my having—after the completion of the course of reading I was commencing when you were with me—recommenced the study of the New Testament. If you want to renew your interest in theological studies I think your object would be accomplished by reading Neander's *Life of Christ* and *First Planting of the Christian Church*, or if it would carry you into a deeper stratum of Theology than would suit your audiences, you might get some very choice and interesting productions of living English preachers, such as *Notes on the Parables* by R. C. Trench.

"I leave the place with greater regret than any former residence. Did I ever tell you of a magnificent young Baptist minister here, named Alexander M'Laren? He is, on the whole, the *finest man I know*."

The letter of August 1st affords the earliest mention of the Rev. Dr M'Laren, between whom and my father a lifelong friendship was formed. Dr M'Laren writes to me:—

"I think that my first meeting with your father in Southampton was at the United Missionary Prayer Meeting, which the Non-conformist churches there were accustomed to hold monthly in each other's chapels. We were both young then, and had few friends of tastes and interests like our own, and we soon discovered mutual affinities which drew us close. I do not recall much as to his public appearances, but I retain the general impression—of prayers winged by earnest, childlike aspiration, and of addresses and sermons of rare grace and spiritual power. It was a time of unrest for Methodism, and his gentle yet strong personality and calm moderation did much to bind the 'Society' in Southampton together, while his charm of intellect and disposition won him speedy and universal appreciation in a wider circle.

"But my remembrances of our close, friendly intercourse are clearer and sweeter than those of his ministerial work. Little that is half a century old is as fresh to my memory as these. Of our deep heart's converse I will not trust myself to speak. Enough to say that I have never found a truer, more chivalrous friend, nor one whose swift sympathy unlocked one's most secret chambers of thought and feeling more surely. There was then standing the old mansion house of Freemantle (with its memories of Cowper). It was just falling into the clutches of the all-devouring building fiend, and was untenanted, and its beautiful grounds with an artificial lake deserted. I fortunately had the entrée, and there on many a Monday morning your father and I used to go, and secure from intrusion roam at our will, or sit below the great elms by the side of the lake, talking of all things in heaven and earth. He was then, I remember, much interested in Miss Tatham's poetry, and would bring out sheets of MS. of her verses, and read them to me in his impressive tones—his great, blue eyes beaming with appreciation, while thrushes and blackbirds sang a loud chorus to the verse. Sometimes, too, he gave me 'screeds' of a metrical version of the Psalms with which he was then busy. Many a fight we had as to the possibility of putting them into English rhyme without killing their poetic life, and I remember almost ruefully how often I ventured to tell him that it could not be done, and the good-humoured patience with which he took my protests. In later years I used periodically to inquire when his version was to be published, but I suppose that he never finished it. Hearty admiration, however, was more frequent than objections, and my remembrance is that there was much beauty and a fine metrical swing about many of his renderings. He gave me in talk many vivid pictures of Methodist worthies and quaintnesses, such as he afterwards gave to the public in these delightful autobiographical sketches in the Magazine; and I can see him now, smiting his forehead with his hand, as was his habit when he said or heard a good thing, and can hear his deep, sonorous laugh which came so freely in these early days, and was in such striking contrast with his pensive face.

"It is not for me to speak of what he was to your Church, but I would fain lay a stone on my friend's cairn, and can truly say that the longer I knew him, the more I learned to love that pure and deep nature, like a clear sea, whose waters, however tossed, could throw up no speck of 'mire or dirt.' His keen sense of humour, his quick poetic sensibility and his sure literary taste were blended with profound devotion, with whole-hearted faith, and withal he had a genius for friendship, the like of which I have rarely been fortunate enough to meet. It burned with a steady light for nearly fifty years of our lives, and, when it was quenched, a great brightness passed out of mine."

At the Conference of 1854 Benjamin Gregory was transferred to Barnsley—a typical Yorkshire country Circuit.

Miss Annie E. Keeling supplies some recollections which speak of my father's "salutary influence wielded by his rare ability, high cultivation, enthralling eloquence, and fervent spirituality over a church just recovering from a cruel and prolonged agitation"; of the benefit received from a Bible-class in which written answers were required to questions dictated beforehand; of a lecture on British poets "illuminated with fine recitations. The last name dealt with was that of Alfred Tennyson, and the patriotic and poetic passion which the lecturer threw into his declamation of the 'Charge of the Light Brigade' has so dwelt in my memory that all subsequent recitations that I have heard of that far too much recited poem seem at once insipid and theatrical in comparison." Miss Keeling tells of my father's rare tact as a class-leader, of his amusing absent-mindedness, and of the exceeding power of his preaching, but little lessened by his weak voice and physique.

Of the letters written during the Barnsley period the following is at least of some interest to Methodist readers:—

"*July 1855.*—I was at a very remarkable meeting at Conisbro' Castle, the scene of Scott's *Ivanhoe*; some 3000 people were in the grounds and upwards of 1000 sat down to tea. Punshon and I were the speakers. . . . You perceive I am at Conference. . . . The first interesting debate we had was on the sketch of Dr Beaumont's character, drawn up with great ability by John Lomas. Vasey with characteristic warmth and vigour objected that no allusion was made to his position of hostility to the Conference. Barton followed on the same side, but in very different tone. He argued that as such men as Bramwell and Henry Moore were not allowed to pass without a record of their opposition to the majority, so Beaumont should be dealt with on the same principle. Hargreaves argued that silence on the opposite virtues of allegiance, etc., was sufficient censure, and gave very high testimony to the sanctity and spiritual-mindedness of the Dr in the last months of his life. Rattenbury astonished everybody and pleased most by saying that although he had personally been in very direct and severe antagonism to Beaumont, yet he was persuaded that the dignified and Christian course would be to omit all reference to unpleasant facts. Geo. Osborn strongly took up Vasey's and Barton's argument, said that Henry Moore was a much greater man than Beaumont, and more deserving of favour. Lomas urged that the affectingly solemn circumstances of his death ought to protect his life from severe criticism. W. M. Bunting spoke ardently in favour of receiving the sketch without addition. He made an unfortunately inapt comparison with the case of Raglan, who although terribly complained of by Press and Parliament

in his life-time yet was spared after his death. Scott (Jno.) said that the position of the Conference towards the memory of Beaumont was diverse from that of the Press and Parliament towards the reputation of Raglan. The Conference was what Press and Parliament were not—a court expressly called upon ‘to sit in judgement and pronounce a decision on the career of the departed.’ Thomas Jackson said that the analogy failed also in another point. Raglan had never coquetted with the enemies of his country, Beaumont *had* with the enemies of his Church. It was finally agreed that the sketch should be referred to a committee, for the purpose of adding some faint and delicate allusion to the peculiarities of the Dr’s case.

“Robert Jackson was here yesterday. He told me some capital and most characteristic anecdotes about my father. One of his tales was that a Baptist minister once undertook in my father’s presence to prove that all the elect had been baptized by ‘immersion, overwhelming, plunging over,’ and only the reprobate by sprinkling. Father having heard all his arguments, took the directly opposite proposition that the elect had been baptized by sprinkling, the reprobates by ‘immersion, overwhelming, plunging over.’ He took first of all Noah and his family, quoting the text from 1 Peter iii. 20, 21, and showed that they if baptized at all must have been sprinkled by the rain from heaven when the world of the ungodly were ‘immersed, overwhelmed, plunged over.’ He then brought Moses and the Children of Israel of whom Paul says, ‘They were *baptized* in the *cloud*,’ which must have been by sprinkling; whereas, Pharaoh and his army were ‘immersed, overwhelmed, plunged over.’”

The remaining letters give the customary notes on books, but are usually of a private nature and temporary interest. They show how incessant were the demands on my father’s time and strength for all sorts of occasional sermons and addresses, and for deputation work on behalf of Connexional objects. Not a tithe of the requests could be responded to. The letters show, too, how diligent the minister was in relation to his own charge; how much he cared for the smaller country places. A very few short extracts must suffice:—

“Longfellow’s new poem is upon the whole a decided falling off, but some of his smaller pieces, as *The Two Angels*, *Prometheus* and *St Augustine’s Ladder* are gems. . . . The comet is here the most magnificent spectacle my eyes ever saw. Its tail is terribly beautiful.

“Calvert from Fejee is the very finest man as a missionary I have ever seen. I had to speak after him, to make the collection speech, and was quite fired by his statements.

“*The Rivulet*, which is dividing the Congregationists, is a most contemptible book. Its motto ought to be:—

‘By shallow rivers to whose falls,
Melodious birds sing madrigals,
Sing shallow, shallow, shallow.’

The Dissenters are getting up a paper which is to rival the *Times*. They are endeavouring to raise £200,000 to set it afloat. It is to be called *The Dial*. The chief mover is Dr Thomas, the editor of the *Homilist*. I told one of their ministers I would supply the paper with a device and watchword—which I saw at Keddleston—a dial with the words ‘We shall’ above it, *i.e.* ‘We shall *die all*.’”

“*January 1, 1857.*— . . . Crime is terribly rife in England. ’Tis very unsafe to be out alone at night, which I often am, but am thankful to be preserved. We have had such murders and robberies in this neighbourhood as fill people with terror.”

“*March 16.*— . . . We have had an awful accident here—a colliery explosion of unparalleled horror—186 persons buried in the pit, which belongs to four gentlemen, of whom Thomas Galland, son of our old examiner, is one. I preached to the colliers on the occasion from ‘Let not the pit shut her mouth upon me.’ We are in great excitement here on the eve of the general election. I send you three pamphlets. My adversary is a very bigoted, narrow-hearted, specious, stealthy Puseyite, who is doing much mischief in the town. I felt *called* to write him down. These things are creating a great sensation here. The leading Churchmen are very thankful to me for defending the truth.”

The controversy referred to in the letter of March 16 made no small stir in the little town of Barnsley, but was purely of temporary and local importance. The vicar, himself the son of a Wesleyan Methodist minister, not only put forth the usual preposterous claims on behalf of the Anglican clergy, but indulged in vulgar sneers at the humble origin of Nonconformist ministers. Needless to say, the vicar found himself over-matched in grave argument and in the biting but exuberantly playful sarcasm, which replied to his coarse abuse. My father’s pamphlets are perhaps noteworthy as the first separate publications from his pen, except a small biographical tract on Gideon Ouseley.

Long before the expiration of his Barnsley term my father had received numerous pressing invitations to other Circuits. He declined them all on the same ground—the chapels were too large for his voice; the spheres, he thought, too important for him to fill. He left his appointment to the Conference, stipulating only that he must not be sent to a big town. Accordingly, he was stationed at Oxford, and removed thither in September 1857.

CHAPTER III

OXFORD—THE LAST YEARS OF ITINERANCY

WHEN Benjamin Gregory reached Oxford he found Methodism in a truly pitiable condition. Internal dissensions had reduced it almost to ruin. All the influences of an University and Cathedral town were opposed to it, and were employed with contemptuous unscrupulousness. The finances were strained to the verge of bankruptcy, the ministerial allowances were notably small, even for those days of parsimony and severity. Nominally the country work was not harder than at Barnsley, but practically it was much more exhausting and exacting, and had far less encouragement in results. For the nonce, my father's optimistic views of a new Circuit failed him. The news of his discomfort spread on those silent wings which are so curiously busy and effective in Methodism. Invitations to other Circuits began to pour in upon him, and he accepted one from Southport, the then ideal of an easy, well-paid and dignified post. But when his first March Quarterly Meeting arrived, everything had changed. The strain on the finances had ceased; the almost empty chapel was tolerably filled; even the poorest country places were "looking up"; and—wonder of wonders!—Methodism was beginning to touch the University life. The Quarterly Meeting entreated their superintendent to reconsider his determination to remove to Southport, promising various improved arrangements as to his support and work. My father so far yielded as to consent to the laying of the case before the Southport authorities. These, with unaffected regret and in a spirit of generosity towards a great need, agreed to forego their claim, "for the benefit of our common Methodism."

With the University the one unpardonable sin was attendance at a Nonconformist church. Dog-fighting, all sorts of loose escapades and low habits might be condoned, but the line must be drawn somewhere, and it was drawn—at the Methodist chapel. Nevertheless, "young men," of course, in

mufti, would sneak to hear the preacher of whom tidings had strangely reached them. Rarely, at first, did they venture into the body of the chapel, but they stood in the lobby, listening through the open doors. They were "proctorized"—vainly. After a while, the scion of a noble house, who had been rescued from a fast life through hearing my father preach, defied the proctor, and threatened unpleasant consequences if he were interfered with. One success emboldened others, and a fair sprinkling of graduates and undergraduates could generally be seen in the chapel when my father appeared, specially on a Sunday evening.

When my father had been rather more than a year at Oxford, an invitation, altogether unprecedented in the case of a Nonconformist minister, came to him to lunch with one of the heads of the Colleges, and to address a meeting to be held in the afternoon of a branch of the Bible Society with which many University men were connected. The story of the speech he then delivered has often been told me. Beginning on the grave argumentative line befitting an academic assembly, he rose to exposition and earnest pleading. Then, imagining erroneously, as it afterwards appeared, that the carefully prepared speech was falling flat, my father told racy anecdotes and old Methodist stories, till even dons forgot their dignity in unrestrainable laughter and furtive wiping of the eyes. He sat down amidst tempestuous cheering. The victory was won. Henceforth gownsmen of Methodist associations dared to attend their own church openly, and some to meet in the Society class.¹

The revival of Methodism in the villages aroused furious opposition on the part of the neighbouring gentry. Tradesmen were boycotted, tenants received notice to quit their farms, servants were dismissed. Necessarily my father was powerless to stem the torrent of persecution, though the events enabled him to lessen the pressure. The Vicar of Bladon was anxious at least to mitigate the drunkenness and immorality of the evening of the village feast. He organised an open-air

¹ Another incident of that meeting may be mentioned. My father recited some recently published poetry by Richard Chevenix Trench. At the close of the meeting a clergyman came to him, and, shaking his hand warmly, said, to my father's intense astonishment: "Until I heard those lines from you I had no idea I could write anything half so good." It was the future Archbishop himself, who, visiting his brother at Islip, had been amongst the audience.

meeting, and asked the Methodists to join him. My father was staying at Bladon, and though not directly invited, attended and spoke at the gathering. Some sort of friendship sprang up between himself and the vicar, of which the Methodists felt the benefit. Soon an atrocious act of unfairness gave my father the opportunity he desired. The Duchess of Marlborough was in the habit of presenting gifts and prizes to the children of the National School, of inviting them to a treat in Blenheim Park. On the eve of the distribution and gala day she announced that only children attending the Established Church Sunday School would be eligible for the prizes, would be entitled to the presents, or would be allowed to attend the treat. The next day children who had actually won prizes went home without them, and saw them awarded to beaten competitors. My father wrote to the duke, but no answer was vouchsafed to his letter. A threat to publish the case throughout the United Kingdom obtained more attention, but no real improvement ensued. An interview with the duke resulted, not as was sometimes stated, in complete surrender, but in most courteous apologies; and a promise which was kept, that all the children of the National School should stand on exactly the same footing, whatever place of worship they or their parents attended. From that time the duke adopted a more than tolerant attitude towards Methodism, and his example was not without its influence upon other landlords.

While he was resident in Oxford, my father published his first book, a *Memoir of Emma Tatham*, a young poetess, whose genius obtained the recognition of Matthew Arnold. In one form or another the memoir passed through several editions. At the close of his Oxford term, the kindness of an Oxford friend enabled my father to take a long tour on the Continent.

The Rev. A. J. French, B.A.,¹ who was my father's colleague at Oxford for two years, bears emphatic testimony to the effect of his superintendent's ministry in both town and country. He dwells, however, specially upon the influence exerted on himself:—

“My Oxford memories will always cluster round those Friday evening hours spent in the old manse in New Inn Hall Street, when, after our weekly preachers' meeting, Mr

¹ Subsequently Professor at Didsbury College.

Gregory would unbend and pour out his stores of wit, learning and eloquence before a small but delighted audience. It was not at such set times only that this fellowship was maintained. In long rides and walks to and from distant appointments there was the same *bonhomie*, chastened somewhat by the prospect or retrospect of hallowed services in the villages skirting the wide domain of the Blenheim estate. There were also communings of higher and deeper things, and, intermingled therewith, unfoldings of Scripture exposition and analysis.

"From such topics of common interest the conversation wandered through the fields of prophecy and history, with their mutual relations, in which Mr Gregory was at that time specially interested. Coming down to modern times, he would recall piquant stories of the days of the last two Georges, particularly of the Prince Regent, or descant upon worthies of Methodism and other evangelical luminaries. Anon he would glide into poetry, sometimes repeating staves of the young poetess whose life he was then at work upon, weighing their merit as compared with the productions of well established authors.

"But the crowning opportunity, and one I never neglected, was that of a free Wednesday evening once a month, when it was my privilege to attend the week-night service in the well-filled Morning Chapel (so called from its primitive use), in which the ripe fruits of scholarship and meditation were presented in a setting of choice language, and with a glow of sacred emotion quite unique in my experience.

"The staple of Mr Gregory's sermons could hardly be called oratory or argument: still less did it descend to the minute particularity of narrative or description. His was pre-eminently an expository genius expressing its discoveries of truth in words of the most subtle and striking appropriateness, interweaving therewith apt parallels and figures gathered from a wide range of reading and observation, and lighting up the whole with the warm sunlight of a truly poetic and yet deeply spiritual insight. This last was the element that governed all the rest. However the fancy of the hearer might be charmed with imagery of various hues, these were felt to be but different refractions of the one primal light which is sent forth from the throne of God to guide men back to it. The

conscience was touched as well as the imagination, and the sharp outline of a captivating illustration became the edge of a faithful appeal."

EXTRACTS FROM LETTERS

"We have had Livingstone, the great African Discoverer, lecturing in Oxford. I heard him. He has almost lost his mother tongue. He speaks English in a more outlandish way by far than Kossuth or Professor Tholuck. He is not an orator, but a very sensible and exquisitely humorous speaker.

"I think I have gained light and strength lately in reading and meditating on the Word of God, especially the Proverbs and Solomon's Song. You will smile at the idea, but I have been shown wondrous wisdom and beauty in both. What are you reading? . . . I heard a gownsmen's examination on Divinity the other day. My young ladies in my Barnsley Bible-class would beat him hollow, yet I am told he is rather above the average.

"We have had a very interesting series of Lent Sermons here on Wednesdays and Fridays; heard a noble discourse from the Bishop of Lincoln, and a very heart-searching one from Dr Pusey; a scholarly one from the Bishop of London, and another of the same class from Trench, the Dean of Westminster, a very favourite writer with me; and a most strong pretentious declamation from Dean Hook. I was sorry I could not get to hear the Bishop of Antigua as he is a *very fine* man."

"Our congregations here still improve. I was told that on last Sunday evening when I was preaching ten or eleven gownsmen were in the lobby listening. I had old Dr Alexander Keith, the celebrated writer on the prophecies, as one of my hearers. He had come to consult the Bodleian on a great subject on which he is about to publish. Last Monday I attended a very charming meeting at Bladon, a village in my Circuit just outside Blenheim Park. It was the village feast, and the Wesleyans and Church people joined in a great tea meeting. The two schools took tea together on a beautiful heath under the walls and overhanging trees of the Park, and 200 adults afterward sat down together in and near a large barn. Afterwards we assembled out of doors, and had speeches—three clergymen, myself and two of my local preachers being the speakers. One of the speakers was the Duke of Marlborough's chaplain. Not a syllable was said which could lead to the slightest suspicion that we were not all members of the same church. The clergy cheered me most heartily, and thanked me enthusiastically. The duke came to see the children take tea, but did not stop to the meeting. The result was the desertion of the public-houses, only five persons having visited them during the evening, the whole village almost being at our meeting, although in former years the ale-houses have been crowded, and last year a frightful row took place, at which the policemen were dreadfully maltreated, and one of them almost killed.

"To-day has been a high day at Oxford—the Commemoration. I and Robin got in and secured the very best place in the theatre, right in front of the Vice-Chancellor, and next to the spot on which the notables stood to receive the honorary degrees. The theatre was crowded to suffocation. I was so near to the centre of attraction that Judge Halyburton (Sam Slick) turned and chatted with me whilst they were cheering him on the reception of his degree. One of the gownsmen sang out 'Give us a story.' The other *distingués* who received degrees were Sir Stratford de Redcliffe, Sir Eardley Wilmot Inglis, the defender of Lucknow, Judge Lawrence Peel of India, Lord Eversley.

"The Wesleyan theory of Superintendency is very simple. The Super is the culminating point of the pastorate. He is Bishop but not prelate, just *primus inter pares* and no more. He is the man to whom the Conference directly looks for the maintenance of discipline within his sphere. He has the responsibility of disciplinary acts, which no one of his colleagues can exercise without his direction. He has also the right of planning. His colleagues owe him subordination and obedience in everything not unlawful or *egregiously* unreasonable.

"The Wesleyan theory of Sanctification is simply that regeneration is sanctification begun, and sanctification is regeneration completed."

"October 1.—The last month has passed with me very quietly. I like my new colleague, the Rev. A. J. French, B.A., very much. He is of a great deal more than average mental depth, richness and culture. Above all he is devoted to God, altogether free from affectation and self-importance. His preaching is full of *points*. Each sentence has a distinct thought in it. His prayers are humble, earnest, fresh, thoughtful and copious. His entering in was not attended with much *éclat*, but he gains on the people. I have been much impressed by a sentence in one of Emma Tatham's unpublished letters, 'Let us aim only at God's glory, and His glory will appear.' I am getting on with her biography amidst many *endless* interruptions. I have been reading Fairbairn's *Exposition of Ezekiel*. The introduction and first few chapters are noble, but alas! it does not maintain an equal elevation. He has all the self-beguiling ingenuity of Warburton and Horsley, and of the Germans, to familiarity with whom he owes many of his excellences and defects. He refines and transcendentalises sadly in places, but is on the whole well worth reading. The clergy here are very *helpfully* persecuting the Methodists, turning farmers off their farms, and servants from their places.

"... We have begun a very important movement in Oxford—first a united weekly prayer meeting at each Nonconformist chapel in rotation, and a sermon in the Town Hall every Sabbath afternoon by the Independent and Baptist ministers, my colleague and myself in turn. It is exciting great interest, being an entirely new thing in

Oxford. I confidently hope for much good as the result. Puseyism is more impudent and insidious here than ever.

" . . . Last Friday evening I heard the Bishop of Oxford preach a masterly sermon from your old text, 'Fools make a mock at sin.' He is a very able but on the whole very mischievous man. . . .

"As to the Millenarian, or more correctly pre-Millenarian doctrine, it is quite competent for any Wesleyan minister or layman to *hold* such views as he may gather from the Word of God, but it would be mournfully inconsistent with the genius and purpose of Methodism to *preach* them as they *are* preached by many clergymen and Plymouth Brethren—inconsistent indeed with the genius and purpose of Christianity. *Brown on the Second Advent* has the reputation of being the best book on the subject, but I have not read it. His interpretation of the celebrated passage, 'And the rest of the dead,' etc., Rev. xxiv. which I *have* met with is very unsatisfactory to my mind. The only thing which can at all be supposed authoritatively to influence a Methodist preacher's views of the Millennium is of course Wesley's note on the passage, which is dead against pre-Millenarianism, but as it is impossible to receive the whole of Wesley's *Notes* on the Revelation, it seems unfair to insist on any one part. The Magazine is decidedly against the pre-Millenarian doctrine. For myself I am altogether unable to reconcile the pre-Millenarian scheme with the Word of God, but at the same time I have neither met with, nor been able to shape for myself a fair and conclusive interpretation of the passage above mentioned. But the visible reign of Christ on earth is, I think, altogether contrary to the analogy of faith. I should advise you not to dogmatize on the subjects at all, but to reason freely and frankly with your flock, and confess your own doubts and sense of difficulty in the question, but warn them against any creed which would relax energy and debilitate exertion. Certainly nothing is true which would imply the hopelessness of effort for extending the kingdom of Christ. . . .

"I have just read a noble book, *The Rise of the Dutch Republic*, by Motley, an American. Percy Bunting's *Life* of his father I have begun. It seems to me that much indiscriminating laudation has been lavished on it. It is certainly much better than I expected. Its style is readable and lively, the minuteness of detail is very interesting: his description of his poor ancestors is in fine taste and feeling. But the book is too much a manifestation of Percy Bunting as well as a memoir of Jabez Bunting. Percy gives too much play to his unwearied but most wearying playfulness; he is perpetually making unreasonable and generally unsuccessful attempts at smartness, and in one passage he enters or rather plunges most dangerously, gratuitously, and unskilfully into the metaphysics of Regeneration, in order to come as near as he can to Baptismal Regeneration whilst professing his disbelief in the doctrine. Certainly his remarks are open to terrible criticism. I was at an interesting meeting in the Town Hall of Newbury on Monday last. ——— was there.

He is a charming fellow, but as to oratory—between ourselves—a caterer to the most stupid and lamentable likings of the multitude. Certainly it is no miracle *mentally* to feed a multitude, nay to glut thousands from a very meagre wallet of broken meats, larded scraps, etc., etc. I felt very deeply with my feeble voice, low animal spirits, and severe taste, nothing could make me a popular preacher but strong convictions, constraining love of Christ, and ‘a calmly fervent zeal’ for the truth as it is in Jesus.

“I have had great enjoyment and entertainment and benefit from reading the *Correspondence and Diary of Philip Doddridge*, in seven volumes. He was one of the noblest men that ever lived. His earlier letters are very amusing. He was the most amative and genial of mortals, but when he got blessedly married he dropped all this, and by the most resolute, steady and business-like cultivation of experimental religion rose to a height of spiritual-mindedness not surpassed, I think, by Fletcher himself. Next to Wesley he is certainly the great figure in that age of the Church. He was the *central*, though not the tallest. His correspondents were the finest men of the day—the Archbishops Harvey and Secker; Bishops Warburton, Sherlock, Benyon and others; Lyttleton, Lambert, Watts, etc.; and on the other hand, Dr Watts and all the meritorious amongst Dissenters; Lardner, Leland and others; John Wesley, who showed him more respect and *deference* than he did to *any* [other?] parson; Whitfield, Count Zinzendorf, and the Countess of Huntingdon.

“I am reading Dr Ellicott’s expositions. His *spirit* is finest I think that ever expositor breathed, but his philology is much superior to his exegesis. He is deficient in subtlety and sensitiveness, and makes many serious blunders.”

“*July 17.*—You will be startled to learn that the day after to-morrow, if the Lord will, I start for Switzerland, where I hope to spend three weeks, reaching London on the evening of the first day of Conference. . . . I have heard Professor Mansell¹ this afternoon, but with little satisfaction; I have heard also the Bishop of Oxford on the one hand and Professor Huxley on the other, on the Darwinian theory, which is now agitating the scientific world. Sir Benjamin Brodie spoke in a most Christian and beautiful manner, and many naturalists took part in the discussion. All the great men in the various departments are in Oxford now.”

While at Oxford my father had engaged himself to the Waterloo Circuit at the Conference of 1860. The three years

¹ Dr Deems, from the Southern States of America, supplied the Oxford pulpit on that Sunday evening, thus giving my father leisure for this letter. He had accompanied us to hear Mansell, and showed his opinion of the sermon, after some ten minutes’ listening, by ostentatiously lying down and going to sleep. The discourse contained no suspicion of heresy, or of the preacher’s metaphysic; it was simply intolerably commonplace.

at Waterloo were, in some respects, the happiest and easiest of his life. Nothing need be said of them that is not indicated sufficiently in Dr Bowden's recollections, and in the extracts from letters given below :—

From the Rev. George Bowden, D.D.—“ My first memory of your dear father was in the Sheffield Conference of 1852. It was my first Conference, and I sat in the front of the gallery of Carver Street Chapel, over the platform. One of the most lively elements of a very stirring Conference was Benjamin Gregory's occasional appearance in the aisle. The call to attention which stopped letter-writing and everything else was, ‘ Here's Gregory.’ At once necks were stretched, and eyes were fixed on the spare figure which made its way towards the platform, not to make a speech but to ask a question. His questioning was a fine art. The pertinence and force of his inquiry were shown by the way in which the heads of our leaders drew together for consultation, the short pause in Conference proceedings, the eager buzz of conversation. One who knew, and who knew how to use his knowledge was in evidence among us. Again and again his few words touched the principle, the history, the kernel, or the crux of the matter in hand. They could not be passed over.

“ Among the happiest years of my ministry are those of 1862 and 1863, when it was my privilege to be your father's colleague. I heard your father preach about six or eight times each month. His ministry of the Word was a continual feast, and our people greatly delighted in it. After nearly forty years it is a treasured memory with all the survivors, and some think there has never been such a ministration as his was since that day. A lofty spirituality ruled it. A wealthy imagination enriched it. His face was a beautiful study as an expression of the highest, spiritual and intellectual life ; it told of no surplus of physical power but of abundant graciousness, gladness, intelligent life, and force. His marvellous diction was distinguished by unwonted freedom, by its originality, its rich imagery, its correctness and its clearness. There was sufficient wealth of illustration to make the fortune of four or five popular preachers. Our regret was that his voice and lack of physical strength prevented him from reaching thousands. There was enough instructive criticism to enrich several professors' chairs, in which at times he would revel as a master artist would in the forms and colours of nature. He made the Word shine indeed as a ‘ light in a dark place.’ There was true order in his thinking, but it could not be set in a stiff frame, the *abandon* of his delivery carried his hearers along with him as on an irresistible current. His stores of thought were so abundant, so ready to hand, so eloquently put, that he often closed book, to the astonishment of his congregation, because his time was gone, and he had only reached the end of his first division. How we were waked up by what we called his Gregorian phrases ! They were evidently minted at

the moment, and bore most distinctly his own image and super-scription. I wish they had been taken down. I remember one in which he pictured the lukewarm Christian as a 'stagnant tank of tepid insipidity.' His stream of speech sparkled as it leaped forth into the day. It told of an inward pressure of feeling and luxury of thinking which struggled to make for itself a channel of expression, and which was 'springing up into everlasting life.'

"He loved our Hymn-book, and rolled out its verses with such emphasis and appreciation that we deeply felt how much of the fullest Christian life, and of the highest teaching and poetic feeling there was in the Wesley poetry. In those days the giving out verse by verse gave a man an opportunity of doing this.

"How memorable are our morning walks on the Waterloo sands! The talk I listened to at such times was a precious revelation of the possibilities of intelligent Christian companionship. His evenings at the houses of our people can never be forgotten. The loving light in his eye, his ever-changing expressions of countenance, the variations of a perennial goodness; his mental playfulness, quick perception of humour, his constant pleasantries which put all at their ease, which abounded in the elements to make others happy, and were always absolutely free from any element savouring of uncharity; his inexhaustible stores of reminiscences, that musical laugh, the 'oh, oh, oh,' on the keynote of three sharps, was most infectious, which lit up and kept up the smile on all faces; all this crowned by earnest, reverent, devotional feeling at family worship made up a memory full of genuine pleasures and blessed hopes."

EXTRACTS FROM LETTERS.

"*January 16, 1862.*—All England is mourning for the Prince. I preached a funeral sermon on the event, which our people much wish to publish, but I shrink from the labour of preparing for the press, as I have necessarily so much sedentary work. My text was Ecclesiastes vi. 12; vii. 1, 2, 3.

"The newspapers have taken a wonderfully religious tone on the death of the Prince, and on our deliverance from war. It indicates the spreading leaves of the Gospel."

"*February 15.*—What a blessing to be delivered from a war, which would, *practically*, have been a defence of slavery! Some of the secular papers have acknowledged in it the hand of God and the answer to prayer. Still, I do not agree with you and John Bright in your view of the Trent affair. *Wilkes* was clearly by the admission and verdict of all jurists, European and American, *egregiously* in the wrong. I *hope* we should not be guilty of defending such an insolent and violent act if committed by one of our own sea-captains, but be that as it may the *law* and *right* of the case are the same. Still, I by no means sympathize with the Liverpool leaning towards the South. I hold that the South is *clearly in the wrong*, although the

North is not altogether in the right.¹ I think no candid, conscientious, Christian Briton can hesitate which side to wish Godspeed. I don't know whether I told you that I have been reading lately deeper matter in American history: Bancroft, 6 vols.; Park's *Life of Washington*, 2 vols.; Guizot, 2 vols.; and the *Life and Letters of Judge Story*, one of the finest men of the last age—a book which gives deep insight into American politics. He foretold *this* disruption seventeen years ago, declared it inevitable, but his disclosures of the political profligacy of American statesmen are fearful.

"The mission of Methodism in this country [Ireland] is very important, but its labour very arduous and self-denying. Owing to the scantiness of the Protestant population, and the death-struggle of the different Protestant sects to retain a footing at all, the ministers here, Methodist especially, must be content with very small visible or tangible result. We have, however, wonderfully quickened the other denominations, and kept them up to the mark. . . .

"In the Book of Offices' revision I was much interested, especially on the exclusion of a Puseyite prayer which the committee in London had inserted. I gained my point."

"LONDON, *August 17*.—We have had a very interesting Conference. I was there only eight days. The first sitting I attended, Monday morning the 6th, the committee on Rouse brought in their report, recommending his expulsion.² The committee being made up of all the big-wigs, I was astounded at the folly of the proposal, and moved an amendment that he have another year allowed for reflection. I commenced by expressing my intense condemnation of the folly and fanaticism of the book, and my gratitude for the purity, unity and positiveness of our doctrines, and the duty of guarding it with sacred sensitiveness. I admitted the peculiarly unfortunate period of our religious history at which these speculations had made their appearance. I *knew* that they were chuckled over in rationalistic coteries, that an eminent rationalist had taunted me with the fact that a Methodist preacher had reduced to the absurd the Doctrine of Original Sin. But I asked, to what do we owe the purity and unity of our doctrine? Certainly not harsh and hasty legislation. I dwelt on the case of Adam Clarke. I showed that his delinquency was immeasurably greater than Rouse's; that though R. had indulged in risky speculation, which impinged on the Doctrine of Original Sin, yet he professed to believe it, none the less. I said it was plain from R.'s preface that he had set out with the resolution of either being a

¹ On this subject my father's opinion changed completely—after reading Spence's defence of the action of the Southern States.

² Mr Rouse had published a book entitled *The Humanity of Christ viewed in relation to Theological Sentiment and Religious Life. Dedicated to the President of the Wesleyan Conference*. In it he contended that children, both of whose parents were sanctified wholly, would be, and are, born entirely free from original sin. The dedication on the title-page challenged the attention of the Conference.

great doctrinal discoverer or a martyr. I asked what was the severest, safest, and most suitable punishment? To disappoint him. I showed that his book did not entitle him to be the proto-martyr of rationalism in the History of Methodism. If this were a monomania, to irritate and oppose him was not the way to cure it. 'We that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak.' It might be said that he had had a year to think of it. I denied that he had been attacked through the Book-room. That was a breach of fair play, etc., etc. I spoke at length. The Conference took my view of the case. Vasey seconded my motion. Even the committee recoiled from their own proposal. Arthur and Waddy professed their complete conversion to my view. When Rouse (who I was convinced wished to be a martyr) found that the lenient view was about to be taken, and he should lose the *éclat* of martyrdom, he resigned, which took us out of the mess.

"The temperature of the Conference is very fine and propitious. The contrast is most blessed between '52 and '62. A saying of Guizot's expresses well my feelings: 'He must have breathed under a pneumatic machine to feel the complete enjoyment of free respiration.' The miasmatic influence of cliquism on the one hand, and dissembled, obsequious discontent on the other, which was so hateful and baleful ten or twelve years ago, which oppressed all expansion of mind and heart, has passed away before the healthy breath of the Blessed Spirit of love and of a sound mind.

"16th.—The distress in this country is becoming quite appalling. In Waterloo we are subscribing by families. . . . We send our Lovefeast and Sacrament money to our distressed neighbour circuits, such as Preston.

"We are much affected here as to the American catastrophe. I earnestly hope that the Union may not be re-welded on the basis of slavery. Our Government are acting wisely in not meddling. Unless Europe intermeddle, the dissolution of the Union seems inevitable, unless, indeed, the Democrats triumph, and the South be conciliated in all points—which would be disastrous, though, for the human race. It seems to me that the South had a right to secede, which the constitution does not touch. It says nothing about it, of course, leaving it as it would be were there no constitution. But I must conclude so as to catch the post.

"... Punshon gave a *superb* lecture¹ in Liverpool on behalf of the scheme for chapels in watering-places. It was out of sight the finest thing I ever heard from him, and, on the whole, I think, the *happiest* lecture I ever heard. He is much finer in that line than in any other. He is a noble-hearted man. I don't know another whose name might be so truthfully substituted for the word *charity* in Paul's description of that grace in 13th Corinthians. . . .

"... We have had terrible weather here—such storms as have not been experienced for more than twenty years. The

¹ Daniel in Babylon.

shore is strown with wreck for miles—masts, spars, fragments of the hulk of shattered ships, barrels, deals, etc. Multiform cargoes have almost covered the beach. We have had a Dutch galliot ashore opposite our drawing-room window for several weeks, and a large ship lies on a sandbank opposite Waterloo, with her back broken. A fine American timber-ship came on shore here, and lies split into three. The men, all but two who were washed away, landed on a raft opposite our window."

"MANCHESTER, *August 16.*—We had very long sittings the last few days, from 9 A.M. to 3.30 P.M., and from 6 to 9 P.M. With all that, a great part of the most important business had to be omitted; in particular, several memorials have to wait for their answer till next year, the memorial of Waterloo for the gown amongst the rest. . . . We had a very important session on the pastoral address, occasioned by T. Hughes's proposing that those who took the sacrament should be recognised in some way in the *Minutes*. W. M. Bunting and J. H. James followed on the same side. I opposed, and suggested that instead some means should be devised for improving the mode of conducting class-meetings, and for reviving the interest in them. This drew forth a valuable speech from Arthur on my side, and strong deliverances to the same effect from T. Jackson, Dr Hannah, and Rigg," etc.

By the Conference of 1863 my father was appointed to the Altrincham Circuit. Here his life flowed on quietly and pleasantly, though the work was decidedly harder than at Waterloo. A sufficient idea of it may be gathered from the subjoined letters. The new church erected during his term in that Circuit was rendered imperative by the increase of the Altrincham congregation. The business details, the necessity of raising money, tried him more than they would have done most men. The work was comparatively new to him. The church at Great Crosby in his last Circuit had been the gift of Mr John Schofield, and therefore involved neither financial risk nor incessant committees. But in the Altrincham Circuit my father certainly showed capacity for business that no one suspected him of possessing.

Almost at the close of his term a somewhat untoward incident occurred. A certain archdeacon, first in a speech and then in a pamphlet, attacked Methodism, chiefly for its separation from the Established Church. My father replied, first by a courteous private letter, and then by a pamphlet that in the opinion of "churchmen" themselves not merely destroyed the archdeacon's case, but showed how egregiously the Anglican

church had failed in its duty towards Methodism, how completely the blame of the schism rested on the church which unrighteously thrust Methodism from her. Only a week or two ago an old gentleman spoke to me of the great effect produced by my father's pamphlet on Methodists—of which there were several in the Circuit—who wished to regard Methodism as still dependent upon the Establishment.

EXTRACTS FROM LETTERS

"The Institution and Chapel Committees are very interesting. We had a very animated debate on the necessity of physical exercise for the Didsbury students, their health having been in a very unsatisfactory state. I took the side of the exercise so strongly that, after some hours of discussion, in which we were strongly opposed, the committee at last nominated Theophilus Woolmer and myself along with several laymen, Mr Heald, Percy Bunting, Professor Williamson, etc., to decide at once on gymnastic appliances, indeed facilities for both recreation and regulated exercise, for the necessity of which—both—I strongly contended. We paid a visit to the Peel Park gymnasium, and have decided on a fives-court, and the best of the appointments of the gymnasium. I pleaded strongly for tennis, but the other members did not understand the game, and cricket was expressly interdicted by the general committee.

"George Steward has issued a great work, *Mediatorial Sovereignty*—two thick vols. octavo. He has sent me a copy. I am sadly disappointed with it so far, *i.e.* to the 120th page, mainly on account of the mistiness of the style. It is not destitute of some valuable suggestions, but is faulty also in one doctrinal point and questionable in others. He maintains that the sentence of death was not executed on our first parents, a position which seems to me quite contrary to Scripture and *experience*, and involving very perilous consequences. This book, however, breathes a noble Arminianism. Its defects are greatly to be deplored.

"Poor Hardcastle is gone. I was much affected by his death as you may believe. I am the only one in the Conference now of the five who were in Spitalfields in /49. May I be ready when my summons comes!

"Our last meeting of Chapel Committee was very interesting and important. In examining a new deed connected with Spitalfields chapel, it was found that the lawyer had inserted a clause providing against the alteration of the Model Deed by the Conference; the question was then started by Percy Bunting whether the Conference had power of itself to alter the Model Deed, which is part of the Constitution. After an animated discussion it was decided that they could not."

"BRADFORD, *August 1.*—I came here on Monday to attend Chapel Committee. You would see that I spoke in favour of an additional

Ministerial Secretary to the Chapel Fund. I have paid considerable attention to the business of that Committee, and am persuaded that a great interest will suffer unless it be conceded."

"February 1. — I have engaged to write for the *London [Quarterly] Review*, July number, an article on this new work on the Psalms [J. S. Perowne], and on the art. *Book of Psalms* in Smith's Biblical Dictionary. They both need overhauling.

"I have undertaken to review Dr Candlish's new book on *The Fatherhood of God*. It contains some sad errors. I have only just got it, and read the Preface and about twenty pages carefully. It will be a tough job. Weston, my new colleague, is a fine fellow, and has a noble wife.

"We are getting on well with our new chapel. The architect says he could not find one thing to wish otherwise. We gave the workmen a *rearing* supper on occasion of the finishing of the roof. One hundred and ten men sat down to hot roast beef, ham, tea and fruit. We gave them no beer. We had addresses and music, and everything passed off well, and would do good. We had a wonderful prayer from Peter M'Onan this morning well worth while coming together for, showing a mind and heart full of truth and zeal. I spent an interesting evening at Percy Bunting's on the 6th with Dr Guthrie and Mr W. M. Bunting, and Dr Osborn, who expressed great satisfaction with my review of Perowne."

My father had received an urgent invitation to labour in the Lambeth circuit whilst he was at Barnsley. The invitation was repeated every three years. Strong pressure was brought upon him by the Conference authorities to consent: hitherto he had resisted not only strenuously but successfully. His sole objection was that he did not think his physical powers equal to the demands of the enormous Lambeth chapel. Again the invitation came to him for the close of his Altrincham term. It was backed by representations difficult to resist. Alterations in the building partly satisfied his doubts. He was anxious to be rid of the petty cares of superintendency. But he still shrank from the appointment. "I do not think I *can* go," he writes in a letter telling of the call. I was then stationed at Croydon. My father commissioned me to examine the chapel, to count the steps to the pulpit, to estimate the volume of voice required, and so on. The report was favourable, but the hesitation continued. As usual he had received numerous invitations, but none to places small enough to content his modesty. So Lambeth was accepted with much misgiving.

Very happy he was in his new sphere, though he could never overcome his dread of the Lambeth pulpit. He began

to devote himself to serious literary work so far as his pastoral duties would permit, specially to the preparation of a poetical version of the Psalms with expository comments. His appointment to the co-editorship before his Lambeth term was completed withdrew him from circuit-work and caused him to postpone his commentary. Mr Mager contributes some recollections, and a few extracts from letters are subjoined :—

“The lapse of upwards of thirty and seven eventful years has not effaced the impressions made upon the minds of survivors of his people by the engaging personality of the late Dr Benjamin Gregory. His frequent visits to the homes of his flock in the Studley Road Circuit were always welcome, as his conversation—replete with wit, humour, and poetical imagery—was delightful. His flashes of merriment were always appropriate, and the playfulness of his disposition was controlled by mature judgment and duly subordinated to the solemnity of the occasion, whether in the worship of the family circle or the public sanctuary. His pulpit ministry was no less thoughtful and inspiring : fervent, evangelical, lofty and convincing. Hence the hold he has still upon the memory and affection of those remaining, whose privilege it was to know him as friend and pastor. ‘He being dead yet speaketh.’

“The new minister, of delicate frame, and serious, almost to sadness, in feature, made his mark upon the congregation by his first public service and sermon at Studley Road. The comely Sanctuary was unusually full, and expectancy and desire seemed to pervade the congregation. With true feeling and just emphasis he gave out, verse by verse, the opening hymn. He evidently enjoyed ‘Jackson’s’ grand *Te Deum*, sung with proper expression, by choir and congregation. The spirit of worship was in the hearty chanting of the Psalms for the day. The solemn litany of the Book of Common Prayer was no merely formal pronouncement : the audible responses of the people met the fervent petitions of the minister. The extempore prayer breathed blessing upon the church and people ; upon the poor, the perplexed, the suffering ; upon all sorts and conditions of men. Another inspiring hymn, leading up the thoughts and spirits of the worshippers to the glorious theme in the preacher’s mind (for the several parts of his public services were always consonant with the loftiest purpose of every discourse), and then came the text and sermon. What an exhaustless treasure-house of precious things the sacred, unsealed Book was to him ! With what clear conviction and glowing fervour he would expound passages from the Psalms, or express the mind and meaning of the Apostles in their characteristic declarations of divine truth ! Even the almost desolate Dorset Street Bethel, with its frightful fiddles and dreadful double-bass, could not depress him, when the Book lay open before him, and but ‘two or three were gathered together’ to hear the Word of Life. He was a preacher

and expositor par excellence, evangelical, affectionate, enthusiastic, and learned withal. His eloquence was not of art, but sincere and spontaneous, though it often scintillated with poetical imagery, whilst his epigrams and clear-cut sentences were made more telling by apt alliteration's aid."

"STUDLEY ROAD, LONDON, S., *March 4, 1867.*—This London work is not nearly so much to my taste as that at Altrincham. . . . I have had on hand the second and third paper on the class meeting, the third to appear in April number, and *Honest Doubt*, and another tract to follow, which I have written. . . . Frankland has sent me to review for Magazine an answer to *Ecce Homo*—'*Ecce Deus*.' I have got about a third way through it. It is a strange medley, written by a clever but very injudicious and self-confident man.¹ His next,² no doubt, will be influenced by the public reception of the present, which on the whole is as flattering as he could wish. He is supposed to be Professor Seeley, brother of Seeley the Publisher.

"Two thousand of *Honest Doubt*³ have been sold. . . . We are getting again into a mess through the disproportion of married ministers to houses."

¹ *Ecce Deus* is now known to have been written by Dr Parker. It was published anonymously.

² Possibly the reference is to *Ecce Homo*.

³ A tract which with its companion *Reason and Revelation* was designed to meet popular Rationalism. Both are written in dialogue form, and are brilliantly *smart*.

CHAPTER IV

THE EDITORSHIP—THEOLOGICAL POSITION

My youngest brother, Arthur E. Gregory, now Principal of the Children's Home, who acted for some time as my father's assistant, has written the following account of the years of editorship :—

"It was, I suppose, in June 1868 that my father, who had been at the Book Committee in the morning and to other engagements subsequently, came home late in the evening, and after talking for a while of other things asked suddenly: 'Well, whom do you think is to be Editor?' Something in his manner made us fear that he might have been disappointed and another name was guessed first, then my brother ventured 'You,' and we sent up a good Gregorian shout. It was undoubtedly an ideal position for him, and he greatly rejoiced in the prospect. He was at his very best, and though not robust was by no means an invalid. Indeed except during a serious attack of pneumonia (caused by an injudicious and of course unsuccessful attempt to discover a burglar in Studley Road Chapel at midnight), he had for years never missed an appointment. It was not till the year of his presidency that he really began to fail. Up to that time he would have been fully equal to all the work of the class of Circuit he was accustomed to take.

"Whilst my father delighted in the appointment, I do not think he had ever coveted it or any other office. He had no trace of the anxiety for 'good appointments' which marks the professional minister. Not long before his death he said to me, 'I have always liked my circuits, and whether it was large or small I had never been a week in a place without thinking it the most desirable, pleasantest, *jolliest* appointment a Methodist preacher could have.'

"We removed to Stoke Newington in August 1868, where my father spent twelve of the happiest and most fruitful years of his life—only clouded by one great sorrow—the death of my brother, Benjamin Alfred Gregory, in December 1876. His friend the Rev. Theophilous Woolmer was at that time minister at Stoke Newington, and his old school-fellow, James Smetham, the poet painter, lived within ten minutes' pleasant walk of our house. Those were golden days. Mr Smetham was a frequent though erratic visitor. He would come usually to supper—brimful of talk, and would often keep us

convulsed with laughter as he described in the style of his more humorous 'ventilators' the extraordinary people he had met in or on a 'bus, the wonders of Essex Road at night time, the curiosities of church meetings, the casual talks with remarkable men—and they were all remarkable if *he* talked to them! At other times he would come in the depth of depression, in moods which fore-shadowed the darkness which came to him in life's early eventide. Gradually the gloom would vanish as old Grove stories were told and re-told, and he would depart right merrily. At other times again he would bring William Davies with him, and the talk would be fast and on my father's side, sometimes a little furious as varied heresies, literary or theological, reared their heads. But James Smetham never came whether in joy or sorrow, in gloom or gladness, without knowing that no friend was more welcome, none more loved than he.

"My father took his place in the life of the Chapel and of the neighbourhood and rejoiced in it. He was a class-leader nearly all the time he lived at Stoke Newington, and took a good deal of week-night as well as Sunday work. He made many friendships, and was soon recognised as an interesting addition to the society of the 'village,' as Stoke Newington was then called. Thomas Binney lived within twenty minutes' walk. Prebendary Jackson (son of the venerable Thomas Jackson) was rector of Stoke Newington, and his much more popular son, Blomfield Jackson, was curate. Dr Belcher (an M.D.), who belonged to an old Methodist family in Ireland, and had married a daughter of Dr Bunting, was vicar of St Faith's, the most advanced High Church in the district, where he used to officiate in garments which amazed his congregation. Mr Jackson and Dr Belcher loved to chat with my father, the former telling him gruesome stories of his boyhood at Wesley's Chapel where the precentor of that day was accustomed to steal the bodies of the saints and sell them to the hospitals, the latter joining him in vehemently lamenting the growth of rationalism and latitudinarianism.

"One of the attractions of Stoke Newington at that time was an informal gathering of ministers and laymen of all creeds for conversation on all sorts and conditions of subjects. Mr Blomfield Jackson was the moving spirit, but the meetings were held at the houses of the members and were most interesting. Occasionally Dean Stanley, Mr Llewellyn Davies and other well-known men came from a distance, but the membership was made up largely of the local clergy, Quakers, Roman Catholic priests, and a few Nonconformists. The divergence of opinion was extreme, and weak men or men of strong prejudices could not stand the freedom of utterance allowed. Prebendary Shelford (now rector of Stoke Newington, but then vicar of St Matthew's, Clapton) told me not long ago that Father Lockhart said to him, 'It's a curious thing, but the only man I always agree with is Mr Gregory.'

"His days were full of quiet systematic work, and it is wonderful how much he accomplished by steady persistence, for he was a slow writer

and a meditative reader. In his own mind the work of the coming years was sketched out. He would suddenly announce, 'I will begin so-and-so to-day. Its turn has come,' and forthwith he would take up a literary task which I had thought he had allowed to lapse. He would not be hurried by suggestions as to what should be done next. *'Its turn hasn't come yet.'*

"The secret of his large production was the fact that he was never unemployed. He read voraciously and miscellaneously. Nearly all the great magazines and reviews were read through, though with judicious skipping as to parts of articles. He had a catholic taste, and rarely read any book about which he had not something good to say. On the other hand it must be admitted that he did not often pronounce a judgment of unqualified approval. Few theologians excited his wrath more vehemently than F. D. Maurice. Yet after long denunciation he would invariably add, 'But, mind you, his *Prophets and Kings of the Old Testament* is a *mighty* book. I always except that when I speak of Maurice.'

"He had, as everyone who knew him personally will remember, a singularly bright and even boyish disposition, an inexhaustible fund of anecdote upon which he drew to within a few hours of the end, and when he knew that death was at hand.

"During most of his life, indeed until the infirmities of age had become burdensome, and the youngest of the family had grown up, he delighted to spend an hour or two in an evening at chess, bagatelle, and even snap. At one time he rarely omitted bagatelle after supper. It was a game he loved, because whilst he could follow it with keen interest it left many intervals in which he could talk and carry on an argument on any subject grave or gay that happened to be in his mind. Chess he regarded as a serious business to be played in profound silence and with ample time.

"Through all ran a clear stream of devotion. His absent-mindedness was of the most extreme kind, but it helped him to a habit of abstraction which made him often unconscious of the presence of any but God. As he wrote or read or sat at table—even in the midst of a game—he would suddenly fall into a devout reverie, his lips moved in prayer, and his face shone with a light from within the veil. He would return in a minute or two from these 'absences' absolutely unconscious that he had done anything unusual or noticeable, and would take up whatever he had been previously engaged in without knowing it had been interrupted. One curious custom was the habit of knocking with his closed hand upon the table or mantel-piece three or four times before he gave himself to a few moments of private prayer. Mr Justin M'Carthy says that Mr Whalley, the famous Protestant M.P. for Peterborough, had a similar custom before rising to speak in the House of Commons.

"The great work of a quarter of a century was the editing of the official organs of Wesleyan Methodism. He took up this duty

with great enthusiasm, and with an interest that never failed or flagged.

"My father had at first assigned to him only *The Christian Miscellany* and *The Sunday School Magazine* with the abridged edition of the larger magazine,¹ his colleague, Benjamin Frankland, retaining the Magazine. But in 1871 *The City Road Magazine* was issued in place of the abbreviated edition of *The Methodist Magazine*, and to this my father devoted his energies. At that time contributors wrote for Methodist periodicals for glory not for pelf. As the Book Room could not be persuaded that there was either wisdom or justice in paying a man for such poor stuff as magazine articles, my father secured from a few well-to-do friends a small fund for the payment of contributors. *The City Road* ran a fairly prosperous course for years, and as the amount subscribed did not, I think, reach £50, I imagine that many of the writers still received nothing but thanks. *The City Road* did, however, give a new idea of what a Methodist periodical might be. It was bright and timely, and numbered amongst its contributors such men as Dr Dallinger, M. G. Pearse, Sir W. Huggins, Professor W. K. Parker, Professor J. D. Geden.

"In 1876 Benjamin Frankland died, *The Methodist Magazine* came into my father's hands, and *The City Road* was given up. In 1877 the magazine celebrated its centenary and a new series was issued, not varying much in outward appearance from its predecessor, but better printed and much modernised in its general character. At my father's earnest request the Book Committee consented to place at his disposal a certain sum for the payment of contributors instead of appointing a second editor. I doubt whether in any month of his editorship so large an amount as £24 (the sum allowed) was ever spent, for though the *Magazine* was made up of five sheets and the allowance only covered four, my father's own contributions, for which he never received a penny, were so numerous that he was always on the safe side when he sent in his monthly list. Whilst he never grudged the gratuitous labour of his own hand and brain, he was very resolute in defending the interests of his contributors, and insisted upon paying distinguished writers on a more adequate scale—claiming that he had a right to do this since his own papers redressed the balance.

"Before my father's time, almost the only non-Methodist writer who had contributed to the *Magazine* was Gustave Masson, who curiously enough was a not infrequent writer, thus giving expression to the gratitude he felt for good he had derived from early Methodist influences. His papers written in a crabbed and difficult hand, and usually on some abstruse literary subject, were continued at intervals for many years.

"Having the power of the purse, my father was able to go out into the literary market, and soon gathered round him a band of writers such as no other purely denominational magazine could boast

¹ From the beginning of his editorship it became almost an independent magazine.

The first Anglican to write for the *Magazine* was Dean Payne Smith, with whom my father had made acquaintance at Oxford. He was followed by such men as Bishops Ellicott, Thorold, Perowne, and Walsham How, Deans Farrar and Pigou, Dr Cunningham Geikie, Canon Aitkin, Dr Edersheim, Stanley Leathes and others. Amongst Nonconformist divines he secured help from Alexander Maclaren, C. H. Spurgeon, Marcus Dods, Henry Allon, Alexander Raleigh, John Pulsford, Monro Gibson, James Stalker, A.K.H.B.

"Dr Lindsay Alexander accepted the invitation to contribute a sermon in an amusing letter in which he declared that he did not believe he had ever written a sermon which was worth five guineas, but he would do his best! Amongst these 'outsiders' it is pleasant to remember that Dr Robertson Nicoll found a place. He was at that time still minister of Kelso, though owing to serious illness he had been compelled to face the fact that his pastoral work was ended, and that a new path must be chosen. My father had been greatly charmed by Dr Nicoll's *The Incarnate Saviour*, which had then been recently published.

"My father by no means pleased all schools of Methodists by his inclusion of writers who dwelt outside the charmed circle of Methodism, and when he carried his innovations to the extent of allowing a Jesuit priest to occupy many pages of the *Magazine* he was attacked with no little vehemence by some of his oldest friends. He laughed at their angry letters, and I remember his saying to me, 'You know, Arthur, I should never have put in Father M'Sweeney's paper if I had not seen how easy and complete would be the refutation.' For this task he hesitated between Canon Jenkins of Lyminge and Dr George Osborn, finally deciding for the latter whose vigorous reply satisfied nearly all the adverse Methodist critics.

"My father cordially sympathised with the idea of ultimate Methodist reunion though he did not expect or perhaps desire it in the immediate future. But he took one of the earliest steps towards it by inviting leading ministers of the minor Methodist Churches to contribute to the *Magazine*. Amongst these were Dr Joseph Stacey, and the venerable F. W. Bourne, of both of whom he had a very high opinion.

"As an editor my father had always a kindly welcome for young and unknown writers, and greatly rejoiced when he had made a discovery. I well remember his delight at the first paper contributed by Mr W. L. Watkinson, then becoming known as a popular preacher and lecturer, but having no literary reputation. Mark Guy Pearse was from the first to the last one of the most valued members of his staff. Mr Pearse's stories took Methodism by storm, and secured a place for fiction in the *Methodist Magazine*. Dr (then Mr) Dallinger was also one of the earliest writers, contributing for many years a monthly paper on 'Current Science' Mr Hugh Price Hughes first appears as writing a paper on the English Prayer Book. Mr F. W. Macdonald found a place more frequently in the programme than in

the pages of the magazine. But it would be useless to attempt to enumerate all the distinguished Methodists who wrote for the connexional magazines during my father's editorship. Dr Osborn, Dr W. B. Pope, Dr Rigg, Dr Stephenson, Dr Randles, Dr Beet, Dr Findlay, Dr Davison, Dr Banks, Dr J. D. Geden, and indeed nearly every well-known minister in Methodism sooner or later came into the list. Amongst the laity were James Smetham, Sir Frederick Howard, T. P. Bunting, John Beauchamp, Mr H. A. Smith, Mr (afterwards Judge) Waddy and Miss Sarson C. J. Ingham.

"Miss Gordon Cumming contributed a number of delightful papers on Missionary subjects, and expressed great satisfaction with the promptness of our dealing with her, which was in striking contrast with that of some other magazines to which she contributed.

"Amongst young writers who have since made their fame in other regions, but whose early ventures were made through the Methodist periodicals, I may mention Miss Ellen Thorneycroft Fowler, Miss Adeline Sargeant, Mrs R. A. Watson (Deas Cromarty), and Mr Arthur Symons.

"My father had the strongest possible conviction of his responsibilities as Connexional Editor. He did not regard himself as fulfilling his duty by making the *Magazine* popular. He sought to carry out the conception of the editorial office held by his great predecessor, John Wesley. He believed that the mission of the *Methodist Magazine* was to defend and expound the truth of God, to illustrate God's providential government, to advocate the extension of the Kingdom of God both at home and abroad, to show the power of the Gospel as exhibited in the life and death of the saints, to cultivate the deepest spiritual life, and to criticise with relentless vigour, but as he conscientiously believed with absolute fairness, all forms of erroneous teaching. He was a most honest and painstaking reviewer. His reviews of theological books especially in his earlier days were greatly valued not only by the readers of the *Magazine*, but by authors and publishers. Even in his later days when the rapid developments of the Higher Criticism distressed him most deeply he scarcely ever spoke wholly unfavourably of any book that displayed real ability. For the shallow, superficial and the merely smart he had an indignant contempt, but to any man who put thought into his work he was ready to give a careful if sometimes an impatient hearing. The books he reviewed are scored over with marginal notes—sometimes enthusiastically appreciative, sometimes curtly critical, not infrequently comical. He read many of these books out of doors, and as he was much too absent-minded to keep a pencil for two consecutive hours, his custom was, if pen and ink were not available, to score the margin with mystic markings of his finger nail, the length, depth and number of the marks having distinct significance.

"My father's view of an Editor's duties and responsibilities were those of the old school, and he dealt with his contributors as the early editors of the *Quarterly* dealt with theirs. He abridged ruthlessly, and

exercised the powers of a literary and theological censor relentlessly. This led to not a few controversies—vigorous and even acrimonious in the first stage, but usually ending with entire amiability. I do not remember that he ever lost a contributor of real value on the ground of too severe editing.

“My father retired from the Editorship in 1893 after holding office for twenty-five years—the longest term of any Connexional editor. The Book Committee entered a highly laudatory resolution upon its minutes, and voted him an annuity of £75.”

Necessarily, the appointment to the editorship made a great change in my father's manner of life. In nothing was it more welcome than in its termination of the itinerancy. Comparatively little has been said of the trouble and anxiety caused by the change of residence and sphere of labour every third year. Few men in Wesleyan Methodism received a larger number of invitations to Circuits than Benjamin Gregory. Nearly always they seemed to him unsuitable, because of the importance of the position offered. It was almost impossible to persuade the Circuit—and often the Connexional authorities—of this. Hence came frequent awkward dilemmas. All this was now happily ended. Once indeed an alternative requiring serious thought was put before him. By the Conference of 1873 he was elected to the theological chair at Headingly College. At first he inclined to acceptance. He envied the *otium cum dignitate* of a professorship. He had literary schemes in his mind which the ceaseless demands of the editorship could never allow him to fulfil. Half reluctantly he decided that he could serve Methodism better by retaining the office which he then held.

Nor has much been said of the incessant stream of requests to preach special sermons and to deliver addresses that poured in upon him. He used to declare that there was scarcely a town in the United Kingdom in which he had not preached, lectured, or spoken on some special occasion. Certainly his knowledge of the topography and the Methodism of the three kingdoms was surprising in its minuteness; but he could not accept a tithe of the invitations sent him, and the consequent correspondence was distasteful time-wasting. To some extent his office saved him from such troubles.

His residence in London brought him into close connection

with the management of his Church, and he took an interested and active part. He was a member of many of the regular, and most of the special committees appointed by the Conference. One of these (1872) was the commission to inquire into the higher education of ministers' sons, and the management of New Kingswood and Woodhouse Grove schools.¹ Before it appeared not only leading Wesleyan educationists, but such men as Dr (now Bishop) Alfred Barn, Principal, King's College, Dean Vaughan, and Mr (afterwards Sir) J. G. Fitch. A considerable share of the examination of distinguished strangers fell to my father, and he had no little to do with the final shape of the report.

The Conference of 1879, which was that year at Birmingham, elected my father its president, "by a practically unanimous vote." To many it was a matter of surprise that the honour had not been conferred earlier. The explanation was simply that his brethren knew that he had no desire whatever for the position; that, indeed, he shrank from it with an almost unconquerable dread. "It would kill me," he would remark, when the possibility was mentioned to him. When he found himself against his will "in the running," he did everything in his power to secure the election of the Rev. Samuel Coley, his strongest competitor. Mr Coley's death rendered my father's elevation to the chair certain, unless the unprecedented step was taken of formally begging that no votes should be given for him. That step he contemplated seriously up to the very morning of the election, and in all likelihood he would have adopted it but for the urgent advice and entreaty of leading members of the Conference and of personal friends. No man could have esteemed the honour more or desired the responsibilities less, and certainly no president of recent times has been less fitted physically for the continuous strain, perpetual travelling, and incessant business of the office.

From his earliest ministry he had attended Conference as often as possible, and since his election to the Legal Hundred² in 1857 he had missed only a single year. He had been a

¹ The other members were Mr P. W. Bunting, Sir Henry H. Fowler, Mr George Lidgett, the Rev. Dr Moulton, and the Rev. W. J. Tweddle (convener).

² The Conference as legally constituted by John Wesley's Deed of Declaration. My father's election *in absentia* was an almost if not quite unprecedented honour.

careful and acute observer of Conference procedure, and had become a not infrequent speaker. His nervousness prevented his reaching quite the foremost rank of debater, but he was listened to with interest and something more than respect. It was soon seen that the feeble-voiced, delicate-looking, sensitively nervous president was fully able to control the somewhat difficult and often tumultuous assembly. The affectionate regard of his brethren stood in the stead of a commanding presence in the chair itself. Once only was there occasion for the exercise of authority. A layman, versed in the practice of town councils, endeavoured to override a quiet decision from the President, and brought upon himself so stern a rebuke that serious disorder was henceforth impossible.¹

The president bore the fatigues of Conference with surprisingly little distress. He was able, shortly afterwards, to lay one of the foundation stones of Handsworth College, when a number of friends presented a considerable sum to the library in his name. He had met the public, the official, and the social demands on the president, with some severe effort, but so as to encourage him to hope that he could continue his work through the year. But he had altogether overtaxed his strength. Whilst speaking at the Leeds missionary meeting, a fit of coughing caused a large quantity of blood to flow from his mouth. He was at once taken to the house where he was a guest, and thence brought home. He had broken a small blood vessel in the stomach. All public work was forbidden, and all possible physical exercise, even walking upstairs, was to be avoided. He spent the winter in perfect retirement at Sidmouth.

The second series of meetings on behalf of the Thanksgiving Fund² were being held. It had been arranged that the President should attend those of the District centres. This was now impossible. In one way, however, the misfortune

¹ Eleven ministers and six laymen, formerly with him at Woodhouse Grove school, presented him with an illuminated address in which they say, "We rejoice to recognise in you the maintenance with undiminished force of your manifold, moral and mental excellences, as well as the evidences of the exalted faith and religious fervour with which we delighted to grow familiar in the old days of our school-life at Woodhouse Grove." The proceedings were strictly private, and necessarily hurried. Seldom has speech been conceived in happier vein than the President's reply, and I do not know when my father was more pleased and touched.

² An effort to raise £240,000 chiefly to pay off debts on various funds. The actual amount raised was nearly £300,000.

was compensated amply in the issue of the pastoral letters which my father addressed to the meetings at which he should have presided—letters brimful with genial, playful, touching reminiscences of the local worthies of a past generation.¹ Their immediate effect was immense; they will ever be a storehouse of Methodist anecdote and biography, valuable for their own sake, and casting no little light upon the details of Methodist history. My father recovered sufficiently to discharge the important and excessively trying duties of ex-President at the London Conference of 1880, and to preach the presidential sermon at City Road Chapel, and deliver the Ordination Charge at Great Queen Street. He preached also the official Missionary sermon in the Centenary Hall on April 29th.² From that time he preached only occasionally, spoke at the Synod of his own district, and attended, more or less irregularly, various Committees. But his public appearances were well-nigh terminated.

In July 1885 he visited me at Douglas, Isle of Man, and remained for a month. On the first Sunday morning he took the service for me at the large Thomas Street (now Victoria Street) church, and on the following Sunday morning he preached in the smaller church in Well Road. This was the last time that he occupied a pulpit. At Thomas Street he was heard very imperfectly, owing to the indistinctness of his utterance;³ but he seemed none the worse for either service. A day or two afterwards he caught a slight chill. Symptoms of renewed hæmorrhage appeared, and he was confined to the house for nearly a fortnight. He managed, however, to attend the Newcastle Conference for about half the session, and to spend a short time with me at Roborough, the air of which place seemed to revive him. On his return home he confined his speaking as much as possible to the Book Committee.⁴

¹ Published in *Sermons, Addresses, and Pastoral Letters*.

² *Ibid.*

³ One criticism made after this sermon is worth recording. I overheard a lady saying to a companion, "I have not heard a single word, but I could have sat double the time to watch that beautiful smile." One of the attractions of my father's preaching was the almost unearthly glow, the transfiguring light that would, now and then, shine over his face while he spoke of the deep things of God.

⁴ On one of his rare attendances at the Missionary Committee he entered the room rather late, when business was in full swing. The moment he was seen the President and the entire Committee rose, and stood till he had taken his seat. "It was beautiful to see your father," a member of the Committee reported; "he had no

The duties of the Connexional editorship could easily have been so arranged and discharged as to leave leisure for other occupation without any real loss of efficiency. But the minute pains bestowed upon the examining and editing of the manuscripts submitted to my father involved in itself unusual labour, whilst the amount of matter contributed by his own pen passes calculation. Still, in addition to his Fernley lecture¹ and his Presidential volume, my father did contrive to publish two books, both biographies. The earlier was entitled *The Thorough Business Man: a Memoir of Mr Walter Powell*. My brother, who was engaged in business, and living at home when the book was written, and to whom it was dedicated, writes of it:—

“My father had not known Mr Powell personally, and he knew perhaps as little about business life as any man living, but he took up the task with delight, and found in Mr Powell’s honourable and successful career a congenial topic. He read a number of books on various commercial and financial subjects—Gilbart on *Banking*, I remember, being one—and made up by study of the theory for his profound ignorance of the practice of business life. Portions of the book were read in MS. to various business men, and their advice was asked on many points. The volume passed through many editions, and had probably the largest circulation of any of his books.”

It was certainly the one from which he received the largest pecuniary return. Its most valuable portion is its commercial casuistry—using the last noun in its original and best sense. I have myself met successful manufacturers and tradesmen, who have employed it as a sort of code of commercial morality.

The other volume was *Consecrated Culture: a Memoir of the Rev. Benjamin Alfred Gregory, M.A.*—the first Oxford Graduate to enter the Wesleyan Methodist ministry since the Wesleys. “It cost him much,” says my brother, “and he found it difficult to bring himself to begin the work, but, having begun, he worked steadily at it, writing often in tears.” This record of a short three years’ ministry was received warmly by reviewers, the *Spectator* awarding it unqualified praise. Testimonies have reached me to its blessed effect upon the lives of young ministers and others.²

idea at first that the rising was not accidental; when he caught its meaning his face flushed with pleasure. He tried to make some response, but could only say some deprecatory words, and ask that business should proceed.”

¹ See next chapter.

² For the *Handbook of Scriptural Church History and Wesleyan Methodist History and Polity* see next chapter.

After his retirement my father settled down steadily to literary work, amidst many difficulties and hindrances caused by his feeble health. To say nothing of articles in periodicals, he published several volumes of various sizes. His *Sweet Singer of Israel* consists of expositions of selected Psalms illustrative of David's character and history, with Metrical Paraphrases. It is almost the only published fruit of that dream of his life, a poetical version of and devotional commentary on the Psalter. I may venture to express with all modesty my own opinion that it contains some of the finest and most appropriate poetical versions of the Psalms the English language possesses. It must be allowed, however, that the work is somewhat unequal. One of his most successful renderings is that of Psalm xviii. 1-19. These verses specially impressed the late Dr W. F. Moulton and his brother, Dr R. G. Moulton, author of *The Literary Study of the Bible*, both of whom spoke of it as the finest version of the Psalm in our language. At the Cardiff Conference in 1893 the former read these verses to a company of ministers and others, calling attention to their remarkable faithfulness to the Hebrew text.¹ Of another publication the Rev. W. L. Watkinson said in his address at the funeral service: "His beautiful little book, *Perfect in Christ in Jesus*, is not only a fine exposition of the great doctrine, but a revelation of his own ideal life and aspiration." Three small biographies, lively, warm-hearted, redolent of early Methodism followed: *The Poacher turned Preacher*—an account of that marvellous Yorkshireman, John Preston; *From the Cobbler's Bench to the President's Chair*—the hero of which is, of course, Samuel Bradburn; and a memoir of the eccentric, successful, godly revivalist Hodgson Casson. Rather earlier he had written, at the request of the Religious Tract Society, the number of their Biographical Tract Series upon Charles Wesley. My father's chief work during this period was his bulky volume *Sidelights on the History of Methodism*, to which we must refer later. We shall see, too, that he was busily writing till within a few hours of his death.

All this time, as previously, he was an omnivorous reader—theology, biography, history, travel, fiction, being perused with almost equal avidity. The first sign of the intellectual

¹ See p. 446. A version of the 2nd Psalm, published in the *Wesleyan Methodist Magazine* some thirty years before *The Sweet Singer of Israel*; seems quite worthy to rank with that of Psalm xviii.

feebleness of old age that I noticed was his laying down the *Encyclopedia Biblica*, with the remark, "It is too late for me to master all this detail." A little later he asked me for a general critical estimate of it.

The two letters subjoined illustrate his appreciative interest in lighter literature :—

To Miss Ellen Thorneycroft Fowler (relates to *The Double Thread*, the volume published after *Isabel Carnaby*).

"78 SHAFTESBURY ROAD, CROUCH HILL, N., April, '99.—I thought I had better read your new book before I thanked you for it.

"It seems to me to be a distinct advance on its predecessor, even in the points in which that charming story most excelled. The gift you most *bring out* is that of characterization by colloquy, or self-manifestation in the social sphere. This is accomplished to perfection, and it gives a dramatic liveliness to what might otherwise too much resemble analysis, anatomy or portrait-painting. Your creations are not *characters*, so much as *personalities*, not *types*, but veritable human beings, and those not sitting to be photographed, not posing, or personating or charading, but being wise or foolish at their own sweet will, or at their own sour wilfulness.

"One would recognise Elfrida anywhere, in any dress, after having seen so much of her, and your Sir Roger is quite as real and to me, at least, much more interesting than that of the Spectator. Your personages however idiosyncratic and however specialised are all unchallengeable men and women. That is to say, you know as much about human nature as about individual character.

"But you have given us two tantalising glints of another faculty as rich and rare. The glints of landscape are to my taste exquisite, and I think they might have been with great advantage interspersed more freely amongst the interlocutions and delineations.

"I hope, however, that you will not let the pen withdraw you wholly from the harp."

To Miss Edith H. Fowler (relates to her *Corner in the West*).

"Dec. 11, '99.—I am simply astonished at the manifold and yet so regulated and well-correlated power—intellectual, moral and æsthetic—put forth in this, to me, so wonderful a work of Nature and of Art. Its strength is the more surprising and surpassing because it is such *still* strength. It owes nothing to sensationalism either of plot or phrase. To my mind, it is a marvel of a quiet, onward-bearing, sensitively and heartily observant walking tour amidst choice yet characteristic English scenery, such as one may find in 'Corners of the West,' with comfortable, and not seldom confidential converse with companions of the way, and lively chattings and

unbosomings at wayside hostelries or sudden and impromptu hospitalities.

"Amongst the most striking and felicitous specialities and spells of the performance is the consummate child-talk, all its unprecociousness, its affability, communicativeness, responsiveness, inquiringness, and intuition.

"Another potent charm to me lies in your clear and strongly outlined, and well-outstanding crayons—not of *characters* but of solid, living *personalities*, who look one frankly in the face with an air of unembarrassed recognition. One knows them well after one or two brief interviews. Even Shirley, Rosalind, or Di Vernon does not look one in the eyes with a more easy grace.

"The knowledge it displays of woman-nature is also unsurpassed, All true woman-natures like a man of quiet and inevitable mastery, who can take up a strong, well defined position, and maintain it like your own good Dr Jim. The portrait-painter is also well painted.

"The moral climate of the story is as balmy and as bracing as the coast of Devon. Justice is done to the heroism of humble life—its pathetic accidents, its virtues, its struggles; and its lessons are as sound and wholesome as they are unobtrusive and pictorially presented—the ease with which a splendid nature can be warped and worm-eaten through spoilt and flattered childhood and home life, and wreck its heart-rest upon the breakers of an ill-harboured Gold Coast of deceitful riches, and dinner-giving, dinner-going gossip society, and of the moral ugliness of match-making, web-spinning, sleek and sly old-ladyhood.

"There are some, to my taste, truly classic passages, which reach a moral and religious elevation and wing the spanless blue, in regions mild of calm and serene air, not often sought and still less often found in these days of stress and storm, and floating, creeping, clinging fog and mist. I would give as an example the passage at the close of a very early chapter where Lavinia throws her window open and looks out on the night, before she says her prayers and sinks to rest. In my old, young lecturing days how I should have delighted in the reading of it, and if I could still venture to lift up my voice, to lift it up and be not afraid, I would bring it in, I trust, with some effectiveness, at the close of some Sunday evening homily.

"Your little bits of landscape sketching are also very more-ish as we say in Yorkshire; they leave one longing for at least a little more of the same superior sort. A well drawn back-ground of true English scenery has a fine effect on tales which owe their chief attraction to still attitudes, or groups engaged in somewhat lengthened conversation.

"That the very useful, humanising and effective gift of educative story-writing next to biographies like Plutarch's, and histories like those of Motley and Tacitus, in awakening and in moral teaching, and to plays like those of Shakespeare and the Greek tragedians, should have been entrusted to two sisters in such effective mastery is only to be paralleled so far as I can just now think by the sisters Brontë, and

by my dear wife's cousins, the two Misses Robinson, one of whom is now the widow Darmesteter. Please tell Sir Henry how thankful I still am to read his speeches which not only well sustain, but also steadily enhance well-won, hard-won reputation, as of the trusty and high-principled firm-footed English type."

In a sermon written not later than the Barnsley period my father says :—

"Inspiration clearly implies that the Bible is, to all intents and purposes, God's Word, as really the Word of God, and to be received as such, as if every syllable of it had been, like the Ten Commandments, pronounced by God Himself in accents of articulate thunder. It has graciously pleased God, in conveying to us a revelation of His will, to employ the pens, the lips, and the minds of men—yet He has *so* employed these pens, lips and minds, that they have not tainted the truth which passed through them with the slightest degree of that uncertainty and fallibility which clings to all the writings and utterances even of the best of men. . . . 'Tis as if a current of nectar had poured through pipes of crystal, crystal transparent but many-hued, crystal over which plays all the rich colouring of decomposed and refracted light, yet which gives not the slightest tincture to the life-giving fluid within. . . . The boon which we absolutely need, and which God has lovingly supplied in giving us the Bible, is just this—a perfectly sufficient and infallible revelation of His will, our duty, happiness and destiny, a divinely certain and satisfactory rule of faith, experience and practice. Though transmitted to us through men, and therefore in the words of men, yet it is in each and every one of its doctrinal disclosures, its practical precepts, its exceeding great and precious promises, and its most awful denunciation, not the word of men, but of God."

Certainly he intended the illustration and the assertion of freedom from "all possibility of any particle of error" to be understood in the light of the last sentence with its confinement to doctrine, precept, promise and warning. He frequently quoted with strong approval John Wesley's note on the first words of St Matthew: "If there were any difficulties in this genealogy, or that given by St Luke, which could not easily be removed, they would rather affect the Jewish Tables than the credit of the Evangelists: for they act only as historians, setting down these genealogies, as they stood in those public and allowed records. Therefore they were to take them as they found them. And they had more weight with the Jews for this purpose, than if alterations had been made by inspiration itself. For such alterations would have occasioned endless disputes

between them and the disciples of our Lord." My father held that this judgement expressed a principle of far-reaching application, and he had no wish to lessen its scope or its weight.

There are not wanting indications that, in his earlier days, the authorities of his church looked somewhat askance at my father not only on account of his ecclesiastical liberalism but from a suspicion of theological laxity. How came it about then, that in his later years he was regarded as the foremost Methodist champion of a rigid and even untenable "orthodoxy"? To the last word itself he ever expressed the strongest antipathy; not because he had any doubt of the truth of his convictions or of the error of their opposite, but because of the combined self-satisfaction and condemnation of others the term suggests. He showed, however, an uncompromising front against any and every deviation from the doctrine which he held to be both Methodist and Scriptural. The pages of his magazine were always freely open to the defence of views of Holy Writ commonly stigmatized as "traditional," and to animadversions on and replies to their most distinguished assailants. The closing years of his editorship were marked by numerous articles from his own pen, of which the series *The Battle of the Bible* may be taken as typical. In them he gave special attention to publications and other utterances by ministers of his own Church which he believed to be a betrayal of the rightful position of the Scriptures, though he was scarcely less keen and intensely earnest in his criticism of "the new school of apologists," which Drs Bruce, Cheyne, Driver represented. Certainly these articles gave great offence to several of the leaders, and to a considerable number of the rank and file of Methodism. The friction which they occasioned was one reason for his retirement from his office. He was well aware of the more than muttered discontent, and felt it far more sharply than those who encouraged it imagined. But he persisted fearlessly; he could not do otherwise; he felt assured that he had been set for the defence of the Gospel and of the faith which had been delivered to Methodism to keep and to spread. On the other hand he was supported in his task by scores of letters and other communications that expressed gratitude and approval, or told of personal help and relief from intellectual perplexity. It must not be imagined that he stood alone,

or even that his opinions were those of a minority in Methodism.

I do not think that my father's attitude towards the Bible and the critical questions connected therewith altered throughout his whole life, except by a perceptible hardening towards the end, from a cause to be mentioned in a moment. Not only had he known, he had loved the Scriptures from a child. From a youth up his delight had been in the law of the Lord, and in that law did he meditate day and night. All light that could be thrown upon the Bible, its meaning, its nature, its origin was hailed eagerly from whatever quarter it might come. In that Book he had found the satisfaction of his deepest and highest needs. To him it was indubitably the Word of God. He had verified its authority, its trustworthiness, its source, by his own spiritual experiences. It was therefore utterly inconceivable that the human element in the Book should be of such a kind as to impair its influence upon "the wayfaring man." He was quick to see that the Higher Criticism tended to destroy faith in the divinity of Holy Writ, was incompatible with that truthfulness which would make the revelation through the Bible a safe resting-place for the soul, seeking deliverance from sin and acceptance with its God. The destructive critical position, however specious and plausible, *must* be erroneous. The intellectual difficulties it raised were as the small dust of the balance compared to the spiritual impossibilities it involved. There was nothing arbitrary or even illogical in this judgement. To argue backwards from proved facts obviously accords with sound reason. Rationalistic criticism, he felt, so misconceived the intrinsic nature of the Bible as to vitiate all its conclusions. He would not shut his eyes to truth, but he held firmly that criticism must prove its points absolutely before the evidence—of quite a different character—on the other side could be overcome. It seemed to him, too, that the Deity of our Lord Jesus Christ was at stake. Not merely by direct testimony, but yet more decisively by the manner in which He had treated them, the deference which He had paid to them, our Lord had stamped the writings of the Old Testament with His own seal. The basal principle of Bishop Ellicott's *Christus Comprobator* seemed to my father immovable. Loyalty to Christ meant loyalty to the Bible as Christ understood it.

Possessed by such convictions he was keenly alive to every defect in the critical argument, and was comparatively indifferent to its positive strength. If it failed to prove its case, that, from one point of view, sufficed. His reading on the subject was rather wide than deep. The exacting claims of his office allowed little time or energy for scholarly or independent investigation. But he brought an acute and penetrating intellect, vast stores of information, and an adequate acquaintance with the Hebrew and Greek, to bear upon the matter. With such an equipment and such a method, the subjectivity of most, the headlong haste of many, of the critics naturally loomed large on his mental horizon. This resulted in a settled impression—to a small extent, perhaps, prejudice, to a larger distaste, but mainly deliberate judgement—of the weakness of their argument when tested *as a whole*. Rarely did he trouble to examine details for himself. "I accept," he would say, in effect, "the evidence of experts as evidence, but I claim the right to weigh it in the scales of common sense, to draw my own inferences, and to take a larger view. An expert is often incapable of estimating the judicial value of his own witness." On the other hand, a large number of books dealing with questions of Biblical criticism came to him for notice, at least a moiety of which he reviewed himself. These he examined with conscientious care, estimating the value of every minutest plea, even, at times, employing an agent at the British Museum to verify references and to investigate statements. In this way he acquired a considerable, if somewhat miscellaneous, knowledge of the separate items which go to make up the critical theories. And few men understood better how to employ the knowledge possessed.

In one respect his qualifications were rare, if not almost unique. All his life long he was a student of literary form and style. He delighted to compare the earlier and later writings of an author, and to make the differences in matter and manner, to trace the process by which a big book (or series) had risen to completeness, to note the effect of time and place and changed circumstance, and training upon spirit and expression. To this were added a fine literary taste and insight. For many years he had studied the Bible as literature, applying the same process to it as to ordinary books. One result was a profound conviction that the disruption of the

Bible into ill-assorted sections, the etherealising of its history into legend and myth, was a literary blunder of the first water, fit only for the over-heated, close atmosphered study of some Dr Dryasdust, incapable of living in the free air of heaven, where all intellectual and spiritual forces were allowed full play. Another result was the ever-deepening and solidifying belief that the Bible could not be treated as mere literature. The spiritual unity of the Book forbade it. A revelation from God could not be dealt with as *mere* literature. Its inspiration rendered ordinary literary tests inadequate, if not inapplicable. This connection caused much of the Higher Criticism to appear to him pettifogging, unworthy of serious attention except for the harm it might do to the unstable and the unwary. He was apt to brush it aside with some show of contempt, not from any sense of intellectual superiority or from lack of intellectual appreciation, but from the feeling that the critics were intruding into things that they had not seen, and that their blind gropings must, of necessity, miss the truth which was beyond the reach of their methods.

Greatly as my father lamented, stoutly as he opposed aberrations from the truth (as he deemed them) on the part of scholars and divines of other churches, he reserved the force of his indignation for those ministers of his own communion who (as he thought) made undue concessions to the critical spirit. To the plea that Methodism has no doctrine of inspiration, he argued that Methodism did possess such a doctrine, founded upon the only fair and honourable interpretation of "our standards."¹ The denial of this seemed to him unworthy evasion. It is no part of the duty of the present biographer to discuss the ethics of subscription, or their application to this particular case. I am bound only to indicate my father's judgement and motives. More than once in his declining years he drafted a letter to the Conference asking for some pronouncement on the subject; but, if finished, they were never sent, chiefly from his sense of physical unfitness for conflict, and under strict medical orders. Finally he settled down to the composition of a volume that should be his legacy to the Connexion, his testimony and protest. The very day before he took to his last bed, he was engaged upon it.

¹ See the review of the Fernley Lecture for 1891; *W.M. Magazine*, 1892, pp. 305 ff.

It is melancholy to think of the wasted toil, of the anxiety that shortened his days. More than once he earnestly committed to me the charge of publishing should death prevent his seeing it through the press himself. Alas! the behest cannot be fulfilled. I have the sheets, scored with multitudinous private annotations, not unfrequently stained with tears. I have spent many hours in the effort to arrange them. But huge though the material is, it is a mere fragment. It glows with eloquence; it pulsates with earnestness; it shows that his pen had not lost its cunning; it abounds in pathos, and it contains beautiful character sketches, happy reminiscences, keen, incisive, scathing invective. But publication in any form, is, for many and irresistible reasons, impossible.—This much I feel compelled to write about a matter of vital importance in my father's judgement, without some reference to which neither his personality nor his action can be understood.¹

There is little necessity to dwell further upon my father's theological views. They were strictly Methodistic; continuous study of the Bible deepened his belief in them. He disliked any deviation from "the form of sound words," and was quick to see the motive and the bearing of any changes. Great as was his admiration for Dr Pope's erudition, he argued strongly and elaborately against that theologian's attribution of "impersonality" to Christ: yet he himself claimed no inconsiderable licence in interpreting Wesley's sermon on *Christian Perfection*, on the ground that its faulty logic rendered complete assent to it impossible. Uncompromising as was his attitude concern-

¹ If, at any time, we may seem to have struck out too strongly in defence of our doctrines and of Holy Scripture, we must plead in extenuation the surprisingness and plausibility of the attacks and the stupendousness of the interests involved. And we gladly fall back upon the plea of our venerable predecessor: "the haste with which the editor of a periodical must often decide, for with him the day of publication is fixed, and no delay is allowed for prolonged deliberation." But we have never made serious statements which we have not either substantiated by unquestionable quotation or reference, or held ourselves bound to substantiate before competent and impartial judges. "*Fair before fierce*" is the motto of an old Somerset family, and it has ever been our own. But we confess that our notion of the proper tone and attitude towards the assailants and the underminers of the Holy Scriptures differs widely from that which some good people entertain. We do not think it wise, nor dignified, nor worthy of the Truth to "Speak with the enemy in the gate" "with 'bated breath and whisp'ring humbleness," nor dare we indulge ourselves in the serene *sangfroid*, the sublime *nonchalance* with which some stand by and see the most precious heritage of themselves and of their children taken from them on pretexts too flimsy and too frivolous and vexatious to deprive a man of "the fee simple of a cabbage garden."—*Wes. Methodist Magazine*, 1893, pp. 718-9.

ing Future Retribution, he cherished opinions as to the extent and application of the Atonement at which Richard Watson would have stood aghast. For years one of the most popular and effective missionary speakers in his own church, he never supported his cause by reference to the certain damnation of the heathen ; he even gravely rebuked those who did so.

Numerous as were his articles on theology, he wrote but one book wholly on that subject—the Fernley Lecture for 1873 on *The Holy Catholic Church, the Communion of Saints*. Prepared rather hastily and amidst pressing and novel occupations, it remains the completest exposition and defence of the Methodist doctrine of Christian fellowship. It disclaims somewhat sarcastically any attempt “to present the *specific Methodist* idea of the *Catholic Church*,” but it is none the less an exhibition of the Scriptural character of Methodist church principles, and is accepted generally as such by his own denomination. It takes however, a wider scope, and shows how both spiritual and historical continuity can be preserved without recourse to High Church hypotheses. Beyond all question it is one of the “classic” pieces of Methodist theology. Severe criticism may regard it as diffuse, and its author always regretted that he had no opportunity to re-arrange and condense it. But the very features that appear faults from one point of view add interest and attractiveness and a certain charm of style.

His *Handbook of Scriptural Church Principles and of Wesleyan Methodist Polity and History* was undertaken by the direction of the Conference, and, after submission to “a carefully chosen committee” was published with the sanction of the Conference. If it has the authority of an official pronouncement, it has also its author’s raciness of style and abundance of anecdotal and personal reminiscences. Whilst it contains nothing contradictory of or contrary to the views and statements of his subsequently published *Sidelights*, it regards the history in a rather different light ; strongly emphasizes the condemnation of the Reformer’s proceedings, and defends vigorously the principles on which the Conference acted, and the polity which the Conference maintained. The *Sidelights on the Conflicts of Methodism*, published in 1898, produces a somewhat different impression, though even here, as in some letters printed in the present volume, it is not so much the action of the Conference which is disapproved (and certainly

not the ecclesiastical doctrine on which it rested) as the spirit and conduct of particular leaders and officers. To a great extent the book is a vindication of the character and sagacity of the Rev. Joseph Fowler, whose son, Sir Henry, placed his father's journals in my father's hands. Of its value as a contribution to Methodist history, there can be no two opinions. A second edition was issued about a year after the first. The Methodist press while gently hinting doubt as to the wisdom of some of its revelations, extended to the volume a welcome which testified even more to the affection in which the writer was held than to appreciation of his literary quality.

No reader of the *Handbook* could doubt Benjamin Gregory's antagonism to every form of sacerdotal pretension. He set the highest value on the two sacraments, he held firmly the authority and responsibility of a separated ministry; but he dreaded any putting of those doctrines that infringed upon the principle of justification by faith or upon individual freedom and direct access to God. For these reasons he was a determined and untiring advocate of the revision of the Methodist Book of Offices. For some time he was the convener of the committee appointed for the revision. To him, with Dr Rigg and Dr Moulton, were largely due the alterations which relieved the Offices of all suspicion of priestliness, and the acceptance of the changes by the Conference itself. On none of his work did he look back with more satisfaction.¹

For the rest, my father's theology differed little from that ordinarily held as Evangelical—of course in its Arminian phase.

¹ A large minority of the Conference, *minima pars fui*, thought that the alterations had been carried too far. The Financial Secretary of the Contingent Fund described the cheque sent for the expenses of the Revision Committee as "for spoiling the Liturgy." A formal declaration from the Chair of the freedom of every minister to use the old Offices, if he preferred them, was pronounced.

PSALM XVIII. I.-XIX.¹

I LOVE Thee from my inmost heart,
 O Lord ! my strong munition,
 My sun-lit castle-crag Thou art,
 My God; my foes' perdition ;
 Redeemer, Rock of Rest,
 Broad buckler, crowning crest,
 My horn of victory,
 My tower, heaven-high,
 My song and my salvation.

As from mid-gloom His glory shone,
 The reverent clouds retreated,
 Hurling huge stones my foes upon,
 And bolts in fury heated ;
 Hark ! O'er the hush of fear
 His battle-shout I hear !
 Peal over peal it rolls,
 Hailstones and hissing coals
 From the rent heaven outshaking.

For Death's wild waves came roaring round,
 And Belial's bands assailed me,
 I sank in Hell's black horrors drowned,
 My struggles naught availed me ;
 Death had me in his net,
 He drew it tighter yet :
 My suffocating cry
 Was lifted up on high—
 It rose unto the Temple.

He sent His arrows fast and far,
 And my fierce foes He scattered,
 With lightnings from His rushing car
 Their serried ranks He shattered.
 Old Ocean felt His breath,
 And, struck with shivering death,
 He gathered up his waves,
 Laid bare his oozy caves
 To the World's gaping centre.

Then the Earth shook and trembled sore,
 Started her strong foundation ;
 The monarch mountains shrank before
 Jehovah's indignation ;
 Uprose the pillared smoke,
 Fire from His mouth out-broke,
 And the charred cedars blazed ;
 Earth's ruin glowed and glazed
 Beneath the stooping heavens.

Deep down amongst the startled dead
 His melting eye hath found me ;
 His angels sped to raise my head,
 His arms I felt around me ;
 From the devouring foam
 His heart received me home,
 And my strong enemies
 Let go their helpless prize—
 For He has overmatched them.

Upon a cherub strong He flew,
 The solid blackness bore Him,
 The winged winds His chariot drew
 And cleft the gloom before Him :
 Thick darkness was His shrine,
 Around Him tempests twine,
 Clouds His pavilion spread
 And canopy o'erhead ;
 Hailstorms are His out-riders.

In my calamity my foes
 Did eagerly waylay me ;
 But when the world against me rose,
 On God I still could stay me :
 From every enemy
 The Lord delivered me ;
 From my lone lurking-place
 Into an ample space
 He led me ; for He loved me.

—From *The Sweet Singer of Israel*.

¹ See p. 435.

CHAPTER V

NOTES ON HOME-LIFE—THE END

My three sisters have furnished some brief notes on our father's "home-life," from which a few extracts must be taken, as they illustrate a phase of character not touched on previously except in the slight reference in my brother's recollections.

My eldest sister (Mrs A. P. Fiddian) remembers her father's successful attempt to interest the child of three years in an eclipse. Despite the dense crowds, he escorted her to see the landing of Louis Kossuth at Southampton, and was careful to point out the right man, "the great black-bearded man with frogged coat. Afterwards, instead of the after-dinner games, we were instructed in his history, why he was cheered, what he had done, etc. Then a large portrait of him was put in the scrap-book in state, and for a long time we had to find the place, tell who he was, and why he was a hero." A somewhat similar process was gone through with Mazzini and Gavazzi; with the departure of the troops for the Crimean war, and the illuminations on the fall of Sebastopol. My father "would say to parents, 'You should take your children to see every great person and every great event possible. It is a pictorial history, and they will never forget what they learn in that way.' He trained us 'to appreciate everything there is to be appreciated.' Very noteworthy was the affectionate reverence with which he always spoke of the Royal Family. Regularly he joined in his children's games unskilfully enough, but with intense anxiety that we should play fair, without showing or accepting any favour."

My second sister (S. Ellen Gregory) writes: "What an interest our father always took in our reading! On Sundays, especially, he would ask each of us, 'What have you been reading to-day?' I don't remember his ever saying I don't wish you to read such a book on Sundays, or you must read

the other. It was always, 'You would like so and so,' or 'You wouldn't care for such a book, there isn't much in it,' or in his favourite phrase, 'It isn't edifying.'

"I shall never forget my intense delight when my father asked me if I should like to join his class. I was such a child that I hastened to tell my rabbit the good news that I was going to class, but still able to appreciate to some extent the wise counsel my father gave to the older members, as well as the sweet, tender words of encouragement to myself and to two other little girls who joined the class about the same time. Right to the close of his life our father took deep interest in our Class-meetings. When no longer able to attend the house of God, where he had always been a very appreciative, though kindly critical hearer, over the Sunday dinner-table he would ask, 'What was the text? What were the points?' The next question would be, 'What hymns did you have?' For that would set him quoting, often in a voice broken by intense emotion, his favourite hymns, or he would descant on scriptural or classic uses of words not generally appreciated in C. Wesley's hymns, *i.e.* :—

'When high the storms of *passion* rise,'

and

'Feed this tender branch of thine
Ceaseless influence *derive*.'

"He was always interested in drawing out in conversation all sorts and conditions of men. With the comparative leisure of the long evening of life this interest increased. He would talk to anyone who happened to come to the house to work. With the barber or the hatter he would converse about politics or their personal history, often ending by what John Wesley calls 'talking closely with them.' But when it came to the mundane matter of the size and shape of his hat he could say nothing, as we were told afterwards on one such occasion, 'The master said he didn't know nothing about it, he must wait till his daughter came in.'

"He was passionately fond of nature. He used to say he was 'almost a negro in his love for bright colours,' and as his eyes grew dimmer, this love of colour seemed to deepen. Almost the last Sunday of his life his eyes feasted on some rich-coloured roses brought to him.

"He was touchingly grateful for any little token of attention or affection. Often as we left him, after having attended to all his requirements for the night, he would say, referring to one of his favourite tales, of the Irishman's encomium on justice, 'You're a great invintion; I'd be ransacked without you.' . . .

"Surely he could say with Archbishop Usher that the duty in which he had failed less than others was that of intercessory prayer. How he used at the Family Altar to plead for our suffering relatives and friends, and for our wandering relatives and friends! Incidentally it would transpire that many of these were in his private prayer chart mentioned by name. When he heard that the choice spirit of W. J. Parsonson¹ had passed away after a lingering illness, he said, 'I was just praying for him this morning.' Still more striking was the same remark when he was told of the somewhat sudden death of one with whom years before there had been some misunderstanding. When we observed that it was a singular coincidence that he should happen to have been praying for——of all people, he said, 'I have prayed for him specially every day since we had that difference.'"

My youngest sister (Annie M. Gregory) says—"It would be difficult to over-estimate the formative influence upon his children of his companionship. He delighted to have them about him, and to draw out their powers with the true instinct of a born educator, yet so naturally and genially that they never so much as suspected that, in submitting to that gentle 'atmospheric pressure,' they were undergoing a moulding of mind and heart which would in some degree stamp them with his image and superscription to their lives' end. He took the keenest interest in our employments, griefs and joys, especially in our childish *bon mots*; we in our turn unconsciously laid up a treasure store of his witty and sententious sayings—'You may be in haste, but never in a hurry,' is one of the first I remember.

"One little incident of my childhood's days made a profound impression upon me, and is perhaps worth mentioning as illustrative of the matter and manner of our father's discipline.

"In a burst of ill-temper I had resented his correction of my pronunciation of the word '*beyond*.' 'You should not say

¹ For some time Reader at the Conference Office. He was the son of the Rev. W. Parsonson.

be-ond,' said he, 'say be-yond.' '*Beyond* then!' repeated I, pettishly, for it was dinner-time. But my father gravely insisted on my making the correction pleasantly. Then ensued a battle royal between two wills. The issue was my banishment to the corner of the study, where with my face to the wall I remained stubbornly impenitent. Time after time did my dear father, his own meal unfinished, toil up and down the stairs, to see whether the odour of savoury meat would bring me to a conviction of my folly and wrong-doing. It was not the sharp pangs of hunger which at length subdued my spirit, it was the look of pained tenderness, blended with the firm resolution of my father's face, which at last melted my heart, and supplied me throughout life with a most powerful object lesson on the tender words concerning God's correction of His wayward children, 'He *suffered* them to hunger.'

"I cannot pretend that as children we never resented the call to leave our play to read aloud to our father some ponderous tome. 'Come and read to me whilst I shave,' was the familiar cry; but if *Humbolt's Cosmos* or *Hegstenberg on the Psalms* failed to find a lodgement in our understanding at least we learnt most practically our father's sense of the value of time.

"We were led by a happy contagion to talk with him of the Divine Word as we sat in the house, and as we walked by the way. When once fairly started on an argument he could ill brook interruption, whether the theme were sacred or secular. One must precisely define the terms used in this school of family rhetoric; one must not fly off at a tangent but must keep straight to the point until at last 'he beat his music out.' A little trying sometimes was this peculiarity, for instance, when he insisted on arriving at a definition, strictly satisfactory to both parties, of the word *satire* before he would permit the younger disputant to start on a Continental journey, though friends might chafe and steam-boat go.

"A word or two I should like to add as to the impression made on us, who saw him from day to day, by our father's personal religion. We owed to father and mother the inestimable benefit of growing up in an atmosphere surcharged with the holy influence of a lofty ideal. 'Be thou in the fear of the Lord all the day long' was the lesson plainly written for us in his habits of secret prayer, and in his constant reference

to the divine will in all the events of daily life. 'We must pray about it and leave it,' he would say. Often have we heard him repeat with deep feeling the words of a sorely tried Christian lady, to whom bereavement had suddenly come in its most tragic form—'I find submission very sweet!' We have seen this crowning grace triumph in his own life when stricken with disabling illness in the midst of the abundant labours of his presidential year; when physical feebleness ever and again disqualified him for tasks he would fain have undertaken, perhaps above all when the desire of his eyes was taken away. Nor can we ever forget that high conception of his sacred calling under a sense of which he so often braced himself for public duty 'in weakness and in fear, and in much trembling.'

"The prayer so often offered by him at the family altar was touchingly answered in his own case. 'May our loins be girded about, and our faith and hope and love burning, that when Thou comest and knockest, we may open unto Thee immediately, ready at any moment to drop our work and meet our Lord.' God tenderly spared him that final struggle from which his physical nature shrank. Unconscious of the near approach of the last enemy, he slept in death, to wake with God."

My mother, after years of frail health, fell asleep in Jesus, on March 6, 1888. In a letter to me, written on the death of my own wife, my father speaks of abiding and close communion with the "help meet for him," hallowed but not lessened by her departure. From the date of his loss, my second sister—the eldest was married—"kept house" for him, his third daughter also living with him the greater part of the time. For some years after his bereavement he continued his editorship, growing, if possible, more and more devoted to it, feeling more and more deeply the personal duty of maintaining and defending the form of faith into which he had been delivered. A slight but perhaps sufficient sketch has been given of the strenuous intellectual life, the unceasing mental activity, the religious atmosphere breathed and diffused, the not unattractive minor eccentricities of his declining years. The spirit of his ordinary life is indicated in his own sonnet—

Dear, homely, love-compelling common-place!
Stout-fibred staple of our daily duty,
Quaint web wherein our life-lines interlace
To form a fabric of heaven-charming beauty;

A carpeting for footsteps to the Throne.

Make me, O Lord, a patient, wary weaver
Of home-spun habits, simple as Thine own ;

“ Woven from the top throughout ” by firm endeavour,
Seamless as that the soldiers dare not rend :

So train my faltering hands for tasks sublimer,
And through my shuttle shoot Love's interblend.

So weave some flame-eyed seraph's tap'stry Primer,
And sum Heaven's science in earth's rudiments,
And teach Eternity by Time's events.

Perhaps a few words should be said of his political opinions, and of the intense interest he took in current events till he lay down on his last bed. As will be judged from his reminiscences, he had grown up an ardent Whig, and never discarded the name. He adhered to the Liberal party, with a certain amount of critical independence, till the introduction of the bill for the disestablishment of the Irish Church. Strongly opposed as he was to the state-granted privilege of any one National Church, he yet threw himself heart and soul into the defence of the Irish Establishment, writing some of his most eloquent articles in her support. He had traversed the length and breadth of Ireland, and had studied its condition. He dreaded any weakening of Protestantism, any triumph, even apparent, of Popery. Above all, he shrank from alliance, on religious questions especially, with such men as Mr Bradlaugh and their atheistic allies. In his judgment, the best of causes had better be lost than won with the help of opponents of Christianity. At the ensuing general election he voted with the Conservatives, a precedent followed for the rest of his life. It seemed to him that his much loved Liberalism had assumed a hostile attitude to Protestantism, and showed indifference towards religious education. In his eyes these were unpardonable sins. He strove to look at every question of politics, municipal and imperial, as primarily a question of religion.

The end came suddenly. For some weeks his physical powers had been failing, and he had complained of continuous internal pain. His medical attendant anticipated no immediate danger, and his household were not seriously alarmed. On August 22nd, 1900, he rose at his usual time, but returned to

his bed in less than an hour. In the early morning of August 24th, he had slept himself into eternity.

He was buried on August 28th in Abney Park Cemetery, Stoke Newington. A service was conducted at Holly Park Church by the Rev. Thomas Allen, D.D., and the Rev. Marshall Hartley, President and Secretary of the Conference. The Rev. W. L. Watkinson, his successor in the editorship, delivered an address of high appreciation. Two faces especially were missed at the service. Benjamin Gregory's old friend, Dr Alexander Maclaren was in the extreme north of Scotland when my father died. The letter announcing the decease did not reach him till the interment had taken place. He wrote to me a touching letter in which he says, "Your dear father was very close to my heart, and my thoughts now go back very lovingly to the far-off days in Southampton when the friendship began which has lasted with unbroken confidence and love for nearly fifty years. Thank God! it is not broken even now, and death cannot touch it." Dr Rigg was away at Bournemouth, and in extremely feeble health. His family would not permit his attempting the journey to London, nor indeed, in the circumstances, could we wish it. He sent, however, a characterisation, part of which Mr Watkinson read. This was expanded into "an Appreciation" in the *Wesleyan Methodist Magazine*, in which Dr Rigg testifies :—

"I have, during the last few days, looked over a considerable part of Dr Gregory's work, with the result that I find it even more valuable and more various and abundant than my imperfect recollection had enabled me to realise. His was a master-pen. His sources of knowledge were immense, and seemed to be always available. He gave himself absolutely to his editorial work and duty. He was indeed no mere editor, but very largely an original contributor to the history and the literature of his Church. He was ever ready in its defence against influential opponents or critics. Nor was it only as editor that he fulfilled his office on behalf of his Church. He prepared, and has left to us as a permanent possession, standard volumes in exposition and also in vindication of the principles and of the economy of the Church which he loved with so whole-hearted and passionate a devotion.

"Dr Gregory and myself were very old friends. We met first whilst still young boys. I did not know at that time, nor, of course, could I remember afterwards, that the boy I met was Benjamin Gregory, a minister's son. I have but the faintest recollection of his presence at

the house of the hospitable farmer, where, on the occasion of a missionary meeting, I, a boy of seven or eight, was in company of my father, and he was in the company of his father. He, however, retained a mental picture of that gathering, child as he was, and reproduced it many years afterwards in the Magazine. His description of the persons and circumstances given more than forty years later is singularly vivid, and, so far as I can judge, singularly correct. It affords a wonderful instance of the faculty for which he was so distinguished through life. His mental portraiture of those whose personality for any reason took his attention was a power in which he surpassed any one that I have known. His word pictures of old Methodists on whom his keen eyes and still keener intelligence had been fixed for a brief season—such as, for instance, those he gave in the wonderful letters of personal recollection which he contributed in his presidential year to central meetings on behalf of the Thanksgiving Fund of 1878-80—filled with wonder and delight the congregations that heard them read. They were indeed very extraordinary for both detailed accuracy and sunlight vividness, though possibly the colouring, being that of a poet's eye, was sometimes more vivid even than the reality; and possibly also his pictures, however striking in their likeness, were sometimes unconsciously more or less exaggerated in the features, whose likeness nevertheless everybody recognised. A typical instance of his remarkable gift in this respect was his description of the father and founder of the distinguished Methodist family of the Coles of Sheffield, whom he had casually met and taken knowledge of in a Methodist congregation in the far northern town which was the ancestral home of the family so many Methodist ministers esteem so highly.

“In the Great Queen Street Circuit Mr Gregory rose at once to be a power in the pulpit. The Queen Street congregation in 1846 was a splendid and inspiring one to preach to. However he may have increased and ripened, and his judgement matured in later years, I doubt whether he ever wielded higher power in the pulpit in his maturest days than at that period of his ministry under the stimulating influence of the noble congregation which was accustomed to gather, especially on Sunday evenings, in the grand sanctuary of Great Queen Street. Many strangers were drawn to listen to the stately and, at the same time, most earnest eloquence of the gifted preacher, whose discourses were coloured and inspired by a rare combination of evangelical fervour with intellectual power and poetical fancy.

“As an editorial critic I have special reason to speak of him, because of the service he rendered to me in my contributions to this Magazine from time to time. He was a most careful editor, studying the connection of thought, noting inaccuracies of expression, co-operating with the contributor to his pages most painstakingly, to secure exactness of thought and statement. In after time by those who may be led to

examine and study the Connexional publications of Methodism, his editorial conscientiousness and his laborious service to the Connexion will be even more fully appreciated than they have been by his contemporaries.

“It would well repay readers of this Magazine to return to its pages and quietly read at their leisure the wonderfully various, the singularly able and searching articles of criticism which enrich so many of its volumes. Such fine articles as those upon “The Life of Maurice by his Son,” on the critique of the Rev. Llewellyn Davies, in the *Contemporary Review*, on Wesley and Wesleyan Methodism, on an astonishing paper read at Washington before the last Œcumenical Conference from the pen of a gentleman who bears one of the most famous historical names in Methodism, but whose purpose seems to have been to adapt Christianity to the ideas of our modern evolutionists, are but samples of articles which might be said to crowd the pages of the Magazine, and which are distinguished by wonderful wealth of old theological lore and of modern literary and philosophical reading, and by strength, subtlety, and keenness of critical insight such as very few men have possessed. Dr Gregory was a theologian, a philosopher, a literary critic, an earnest and tender teacher of spiritual truth. Such various qualities and accomplishments were combined in our departed friend, the like of whom for versatility, readiness, and depth combined, even the youngest reader will hardly see again.

“In private intercourse Dr Gregory was frank, generous, and thoroughly genial. His wit, his variety of knowledge, his ready felicity of conversation, his fund of anecdote and illustration made him a companion of singular charm. He was a true friend in time of need; the joy of his friends was his joy, their sorrow and trial he made his own. He was a brother indeed! Looking back over more than half a century in which he and I have taken pleasant counsel together, it is not possible for me to express what I feel of the wealth of his affection and the value of his companionship and counsels.

“To few men has our Church owed a deeper debt than to Dr Gregory. There are, alas! very few indeed surviving who can speak with knowledge of what he was to them personally. I may be permitted to testify not only for myself, but for many who knew and loved him, and passed away before his time came.”

Sir Henry Fowler writing to me says that he feels “unable to do justice to your father,” and adds: “My recollections of your father range from my boyhood to the end of his long and useful life, and I can truthfully say that I have rarely met with so charming, so valued, and so unique a personality. He was

a scholar, a theologian, a fascinating author, a powerful controversialist, an eloquent preacher, a faithful friend, and everywhere and in all companies a consistent Christian gentleman. His autobiographical reminiscences of his early life recall the influences which moulded his character and qualified him for the public duties which he so ably discharged. From his first Circuit to the close of his editorial career, and during the calm of his 'supernumerary' life, he was a noble example of the highest type of a true 'Methodist preacher.' His loyalty to his friends, and his appreciation of those from whom he differed on the controversies of the day, his unflinching courage on behalf of what he believed to be just, his ardent devotion to Methodism in the eventful conflicts which he has so impartially described in his *Side Lights*, are characteristics which those who knew him will never forget. Passionately attached to the teachings and traditions of the Church to which his life was consecrated, he sympathised with the progressive developments which were the inevitable evolution of the old-fashioned Methodism in which he delighted. He had seen the dangers of political partizanship in many great religious movements, and while frank in his opinion of public men and public affairs, he dreaded alliances with any political party, whether that party was one to which he was opposed or one which he favoured. He never faltered in his allegiance to that cardinal, vital principle which has been the glory, and, I trust, will continue to be the glory of *Wesleyan* Methodism—'the friend of all, the enemy of none.' "

His official obituary (*Minutes of Conference*, 1901) declares: "In him Methodism lost an original thinker, a subtle and an apt expositor, a preacher of remarkable power, a writer of rare literary gifts, and a devout son."

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